JANUARY, 1920 VOL. L, No. 5

THE BOOKMAN

LITERATURE FROM THE LECTURE PLATFORM

BY RICHARD BURTON

COLERIDGE has called love a "local anguish". As a lecturer who for many years has wandered up and down the land dispensing literature alike to the masses and the classes, I would steal the phrase and say that literature also seems to be a local anguish—in the sense that locality often influences the literary view. To be sure, Homer is likely to be Homer; Dante, Dante; and Shakespeare, Shakespeare — whether the city of judgment be Portland, Maine; or Portland, Oregon; New York, Galveston, or Los Angeles. Yet even with the world-masters, the degree of culture and the community-thought condition the personal opinion. Mason City, Iowa, is pretty sure to think better of Harold Bell Wright or Gene Stratton-Porter—do not misunderstand me, they are not bracketed as on a par—than will Baltimore or Boston. The farmer folk of Wisconsin or the Dakotas will appreciate Garland's "Main-Traveled Roads" more than will the sophisticated denizen of some large eastern town. Why not? Those stories talk of what the people know and are a part of.

I think one statement may be made as well-nigh axiomatic in its wide application: a local author who has succeeded,—mind you, not until he succeeds (as before that he may illustrate the truth that he is a prophet without honor) but with *success*,—will be given an importance out of proportion to his rank in critical appraisal. And with this goes the companion fact that an author who exploits the village, the town, the community life, naturally interests the local inhabitants and is more likely to be read, albeit disapproved—as was Sally McLean in her Cape Cod folks, and Cable in his first Creole tales. Write a local book and you will find out a deal about human nature. Literature, like charity, begins at home.

It is rather fascinating to note these differences and to broaden your knowledge both of life and letters in this way. For, be it observed, the lecturer has an almost infallible test: he finds out by the response, or—as we prefer in these days to express it —by the reaction of his audiences to what he talks about. The subjects they choose to be lectured on is part of the revelation: I know, for ex-

ample, that a dozen clubs wish to hear of fiction or drama, where one wants poetry. But far surer as a guide is the interest awakened in the seats; an interest (or lack of it, alas!) terribly certain to be detected by the experienced platform person. After you have done it for a quarter century or so, it is as easy to recognize the moment when the people out in front turn from languid or bored to attentive and tensioned, as it is to distinguish the colors of the spectrum through a spectroscope. And by a little skilful probing and manipulation you shall discover the main local emphasis placed upon writers whose relative critical values have been long since decided, and you shall get some refreshing variations upon conventional opinion.

In a small Wyoming town, where perhaps a railroad company has asked you to step off and enlighten the inhabitants on Rudyard Kipling, you may find that the cowboy rhymes of Knibbes are preferred and ranked higher; while Shakespeare is not at all at the centre of the literary circle. In fact, after long observation it is my firm conviction that people who read as they run and are far enough away from parlor coteries to know no better, care not at all for the author of "Hamlet". That is the plain truth, and we can like it or leave it. As for an author like Chaucer, why, he is in the outer darkness, he simply does not exist. I could laugh right out loud at the mere idea of speaking on Spenser's "The Faery Queene" in some settlements I have visited. Nevertheless, it is my decided preference to try to purvey literature to untutored honest folk scattered all over the United States in tiny and remote spots,—the kind of places which naturally look to Omaha or Kansas City as the cultural centre; rather than to face a certain type of human making up the blasé group in some select city drawing-room,—the kind that knows it all, and yawns over the knowledge.

Those rural and small-town people, who have awful fringed lambrequins, and scroll-work effects at the doors, and antimacassars over the chairs, have the exceeding great virtue of honesty. They want the best and are plastic to learn, pathetically so. Their windows are open toward Jerusalem, even if their orientation is all wrong, and the city have quite another name. They are not "educated" enough to know it is bad form to be enthusiastic over anything. God bless them, you can see them grow!

Whereas the drawing-room devotees, lifting their lorgnettes if you meekly imply that Tennyson is a respectable poet, and keen at once when Amy Lowell's polyphonic prose is sighted in the offing—they are almost hopeless material. They are not local; but typical wherever fools do congregate. If you handed them any unsigned poem by Shelley, not one in ten could identify it; but they wax shrill and glib over free verse and the imagists. Their information (you discover on questioning) almost invariably comes secondhand through some lecture rather than from an understanding examination of the documents in the case. It is most encouraging to find a group of bookish women engaged in the study of the new movement in poetry; a phase of culture well worth attention. The trouble is there is no background for a comparison, no real training in the history of the noble poetic art. Hence you are amiably forced to the conclusion that the whole agitation is a faddish thing,—a desire to be in the

know, masking as the serious pursuit of knowledge and culture.

This is the sort of club that when Ibsen is proposed as a possible subject, waves him haughtily aside with the stereotyped remark,—I believe Miss Lowell would call it a cliché,—"No, we did *him* last season." And somehow you know the poor old Norwegian was done! May God save the souls of all such—when they have them!

The lecturer comes to rephrase thus as an expression of his feelings, Patrick Henry's historic cry: "Give me real training or give me open-minded ignorance". The half-breeds of culture are the very devil.

The different sections of America doubtless offer various reactions in contrast with each other. It is not wise to sneer at McCutcheon in Chicago, to praise Cable in New Orleans, or even to mention Mrs. Stowe in Galveston. Once in the last-named town I was in the middle of a sentence which was to climax with the name of the author of Uncle Tom. It flashed upon me at the psychological moment that the point would not go in that particular auditorium; and I shifted names with a dexterity, and a neatness which I have frankly admired in myself ever since. Broadly speaking, the South is somewhat touchy about its authors; not unnaturally, since the South has been in the past a trifle slow in recognizing that it had any to speak of. Hence a patriotism which is warm and winsome. I never stop a few days in a southern town that I am not introduced to the work or person of one who is taken seriously by the community; and woe to you if you do not do likewise! You will find on a little investigation that it was the fashion in books on American literature, written by New Englanders, as a rule, to minimize the southern contribution, and sensitiveness was developed accordingly; a most natural result. Now and long since, such critical manuals do full justice to the fine romantic work in the literature below Mason and Dixon's line, and the hatchet is well buried. Yet a flicker of the old feeling can be detected by anyone who, peddling literature vocally in the South, inadvertently albeit innocently appears to treat the southern writer in a cavalier fashion. Contrariwise, warm and just appreciations of Poe and Lanier, Page and Allen and Chandler Harris receive a perfervid return of approval.

As a sweeping generalization, also, it may be said that the response to the emotional appeal of books is prompter and heartier in the South. There can be but one opinion on this. Southern audiences take a point that is aimed at the heart better than do northern folk. As a result, a lecturer has a livelier, happier time in those sunny climes. The greatest experience of the kind within my long memory was in addressing a group of colored folk—schoolteachers—in San Antonio, Texas. It was an emotional orgy, and left me limp but elated at the close of my effort when the audience to a woman arose with apparent spontaneity and sang a hymn. I leave to those of satiric tendency the suggestion that it was a psalm of deliverance. But the way those negroes vibrated to a touch of pathos or a dramatic scene was truly wonderful. They were veritable wind-harps in their reaction to things of the heart and spirit.

The problem is complicated by the fact that sections often mean types, so that the result is ethnic, as well as geographical. The colored people

responded not as southerners but as negroes. The Pennsylvania Dutch react with a tranquil inexpressiveness which sows terror in a speaker's heart; the Norwegian is slower to take in a point than is he of Celtic origin. I remember once, speaking in a normal school in Pennsylvania, that for five ghastly nights on end there was never a surface sign that anything said had made the slightest impression on any human in front. It was very dreadful. Stolidly they sat there like so many sheep led to the slaughter, and did not even pay me the compliment of going out. Charles Lamb, Browning, Kipling, and Stevenson all looked alike to them. Bitterly, they just sat and sat and sat. Ten years later I met a lady who told me I had made an exceptional impression. But the news came too late. I had permanently aged.

The Norwegian is a graver, more reverential person than the American, with a keener sense of decorum. Once in a Scandinavian church my talk was preceded by the singing of a cantata, with organ accompaniment, by a number of young folk of that race. They started bravely, but broke down midway; the sound just petered out. The embarrassment, nervous tittering, and shamefaced unease which would have characterized Americans in a like situation, was it here? Not a bit of it. Sadly, sedately, with perfect self-possession, they started that cantata all over again and this time carried it through with success. But a speaker who is present at such an exhibition knows one thing: his jokes will not be received hilariously; and even pretty bad ones will be treated with restraint.

Of course, the response of an audience to literature is two things according as they are urban or rustic; the distinction has its difference, beyond any question. The city audience, being sophisticated, is more alive to wit; the country audience, being better-hearted, to humor. I say this with malice prepense, hoping it will enrage city persons, like myself. I am here to tell the truth and therefore reiterate that while your appeal is more effective in that which demands rapid cerebration, the emotions of people not subjected to the sharp dealing of a town are a richer reservoir to draw on; and this in spite of the fact that the countryman is less expressive of his feelings so far as external manifestations are concerned. I have been deceived at times by this stolid exterior; only to have my impression corrected by observing the surreptitious tear wiped from the confessional eye. But there is no doubt that, other things equal, your city person is less prone to let his emotions have their way with him. That is why plays of simple heart interest, in the naïve phrase, go better on the road than in town.

Religion conditions the reading habit; and locality connects with this fact. I mean that in my peregrinations I run into literary attitudes conditioned or colored by denominational bias. Thus in a Methodist school in New England I find on a centre table a book cried up as wonderful, "The Essays of Bishop Quayle" of that church, and—confessing myself with the proper shame as hitherto innocent of any knowledge of him as a writer—on perusal he appears a fellow of infinite zest, really worth while. Or on going off into Catholic schools I continually run into literature emanating from the worthies of that faith and am thus introduced into a new world of writers, many of them of great attraction quite aside from

their church significance. These experiences quicken one's sense of how broad is the stately demesne of letters, what range, variety, and viewpoint they can display.

It gives one a sense of the far-carrying power of books to drop into conversation with a man who looks like a cowboy, outside a little shack in North Dakota inside of which a talk on Ibsen is about to take place, and discover in him the best-informed person on the Norwegian dramatist encountered in years. We walked up and down outside the hut, strenuously threshing out questions of teaching and technique, while a vast wheat plain stretched to an horizon where the setting sun loomed grotesquely large, and you felt as if to move your footsteps west was literally to walk off the edge of the world and fall into space. Being of Scandinavian extraction, he had the advantage of knowing the author of "The Doll's House" in his own tongue; and his views, moreover, were untrammeled with too great acquaintance with what the critics had decided about Ibsen. He went straight to headquarters and his opinions were masculine, clear, and cogent.

I am convinced that climate affects the attitude toward literature and conditions the reaction. Take California, for instance: Californians, especially southern Californians, are incorrigibly cheerful; they are natural optimists, and pagan in their outlook. And well they may be, with that heavenly climate to remind them of the more genial mood of Deity. The inhabitants naturally gravitate toward cheer-up books, the Pollyanna interpretation of life; exceptions only give emphasis to the usual. The main demand is for the *joie de vivre* in books to balance the joy of living in life itself. Neitzsche could never be an acceptable apostle in California, nor eke in Oregon. He would be a grotesque anomaly, arousing instinctive antagonism. The few who might make him a parlor game would secure scant adherence. Frank Norris, a Californian and certainly one of our ablest writers of fiction, went east, studied at Harvard, and produced some very grim examples of realism. But the view was cosmopolitan and sophisticated, and the far westerners did not much care for it. The Bret Harte view was more germane to their moods. Or if they want the grim, they will take the grimness of Jack London, with his intense love for the joy of the battle.

In the same way and for a similar reason, southerners care most for their writers who express the romanticism which is natural to and inherent in their part of the land: Page and Stuart and Lane Allen in his younger books. Mark Twain is peculiar, not to say unique, in my experience of literary reactions. I can find no section that cares more for him than another. He is at home in all the states. He is no more for the middle West or Southwest or far West than he is for New York or New England. He is, as the poet said of the little girl, "welcome at all frontiers". Perhaps here is a sign of his greatness.

A thing that has long impressed me with regard to the reception of literature from the platform and the interest in it on the part of the assembly, is the vague, uncertain way in which human beings come into touch with letters, the fumbling fashion through which they come to recognize literary standards and values. W. W. Ellsworth in his delightful book, "A Golden Age of Authors", states that

"Lorna Doone" only began to sell in England because at the time the Marquis of Lorne happened to get married. I can well believe it. The chance agreement of names did more than the merit of the romance. For another illustration, my own name is unbelievably confused with that of Robert Burton, he of "The Anatomy of Melancholy", who died in 1640; and I would hate to tell you the number of times I have been addressed, referred to, and spoken of as Sir Richard Burton. One day, countless years ago, in the library of Johns Hopkins University, a buckish, good-looking young fellow came up and said to me: "I beg your pardon, but is this Sir Richard Burton?" I regretfully replied that it was not. The questioner was a man by the name of Richard Harding Davis who at that time had not written a line. It is also evident that he was not cocksure as to his literary references. But he was very dear and charming. And I remember like yesterday his telling me that he had written a little football story and sent it to "St. Nicholas"; adding that if they did not take it he would never try again. They *did* take it, and paid him twenty dollars for it. It was his first earnings with his pen. Some of the twenty dollars was expended on beer which was consumed between us in his lodgings to celebrate his literary début. But "Sir" Richard has dogged me all my days, and "Did you translate the Arabian Nights?" is a question so familiar as to have a bromidic sound to my ears.

When one is asked if Joseph Conrad is an Englishman, one is not surprised, in view of the marvelous command of our tongue displayed by the great Pole; but it can be pardoned to Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. Riggs) if she loses her academic calm when "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" is blithely attributed to her.

I have talked up and down the states on the Bible as literature for a long while, and have come to the conclusion that the acquaintance with the Book of Books is decidedly shaky, speaking by and large. Even pious people, with the presumptive advantage of at least weekly converse with Bible reading, make some queer mistakes, as where Rahab was referred to in my presence as "a fine old chap". But college students do not stop at those trifling blunders; they gloriously mix up the classical and Hebrew details and remain cheerful throughout the ordeal: as where the Apocalypse was defined as "the temple where the Delphic oracles performed their rights". It was a student of waggish tendency who, being asked what the book of Numbers was about, promptly replied, "About things too numerous to mention"—not a bad answer, after all, if you happen to recall that particular book? Yes, I agree with William Lyon Phelps that the Holy Bible should be included in the college curriculum. Since it is the central cultural book of the race, why not incidentally know a little something about it?

PERSONAL DETAILS

BY P. G. WODEHOUSE

IN a second-hand bookshop the other day I came across a volume of articles and essays written by Israel Zangwill and published in the year 1896. The contents dealt with a variety of subjects, but treated chiefly of life as it strikes an author: and one of the essays was entitled "The Penalties of Fame". It began as follows:

> There is one form of persecution to which celebrity or notoriety is subject, which Ouida has omitted in her impassioned protest. (Apparently Ouida had been kicking about something.) It is interviewing carried one step further. The auto-interview, one might christen it, if the officiating purist would pass the hybrid name. You are asked to supply information about yourself by post. The ordinary interview, whatever may be said against it, is at least painless; and, annoying as it is to after-reflection to have had your brain picked of its ideas by a stranger who gets paid for them, still the mechanical vexations of literature are entirely taken over by the journalist who hangs on your lips. But when you are asked to contribute particulars about yourself to a newspaper, it is difficult, however equable your temperament, not to feel a modicum of irritation.

The emotion I, personally, feel in such circumstances is not irritation, but a sort of dazed helplessness. As far as any temptation to irritation goes, that is overcome by the implied compliment. To a retiring individual it is not unpleasant to be given the impression that a vast public is waiting eagerly for information about himself, his life story, and his personality. It is, at any rate, evidence that a certain number of people read his stuff. No, I am not annoyed, but I certainly do feel embarrassed and rattled, as if I had been asked to recite "Gunga Din" at the church sociable and had forgotten how it began. Or as if, in response to calls of "Author!" on the night of the opening performance of a play, I had come before the curtain and when it was too late to withdraw, had found that I was expected to make a speech.

Two recent events, happening almost simultaneously, have given me this embarrassed and helpless feeling. I have just been interviewed, and the Strenuous Life Publishing Company of a certain western city has made a request for some picturesque personal details about me. This practically amounts to a Boom. Wodehouse stock is shooting up. Pelham is going to par. In a word, Great Neck's favorite son has begun to make his presence felt.

All this is splendid. It makes me glow. I sing in my bath. But there is always a catch in these good things, and in my case it is the fact that, until this happened, it had never even crossed my mind that I was about the dullest chunk of dough that ever went through life without doing a thing except eat and sleep and tremble at the sight of a job of work. These calls upon me to stand and deliver something personal and picturesque in my past, have revealed me to myself for what I am. Previously, I had always gone about under the impression that I was a pretty likely sort of individual, removed by many parasangs from the common herd or bourgeoisie. Even now I hate to believe that I am really as dull as I seem, and yet what other explanation is there of the fact that I

have lived all these years without doing anything of the slightest interest to anybody?

The interview was the worst. The man got out his note-book and sharpened his pencil and moistened the point and looked at me with a bright, trusting look in his eyes. "This", he seemed to say, "is going to be good. This will be something to tell the boys at the corner drug-store." And he asked me about my career.

I let my mind wander back over the past. It was like taking a stroll through the Mojave desert.

"I came to America from England", I said at last, "in 1904."

"Yes?" he said excitedly. "And then?"

"Oh, then I went back again."

"And when did you return to America?"

"In 1909."

"And what happened then?"

"I stayed there."

And that was all. There were other questions and other answers, but the answers were all just as startling as the above, no more, no less. My interviewer went away with rather a wan expression on his face, murmuring something about writing it all up as a personal feature story. Well, unless he puts a bit of jazz into it on his own account, it will read like a personal feature story of the wart-hog at the Bronx zoo. It looks to me as if the only man who could handle my life story right would be the author in George Ade's fable who wrote "The Simple Annals of John Gardensass", in which the outstanding events were when John sold the cow and, later, sat on the fence and whittled.

Other authors are not like that. I know at least three who contributed their first story to a magazine from prison. The average author, as far as I can make out, is a fellow who ran away from home at the age of ten, sailed seven times round the world on a sailing-ship, did a bit of pearl-poaching, was a prominent figure in the Homestead Riots and the Spanish War, went on the stage, tramped for a few years, and then, when he was good and ready, took his pen in hand and started to turn out wholesome fiction for the young girl. There is something to a man like that. He stands out. You feel he has established his right to live. But as for me—well, the only interesting thing that ever happened to me was when I drank the liniment in the dark by mistake for the sherry.

There is nothing to catch hold of even in my methods of writing. Hobbes, who wrote "The Leviathan", "mused as he walked; and he had in the head of his cane a pen and ink-horn". That would make a paragraph in any Sunday paper. Thackeray, when he got a good idea, would jump out of bed and run round and round his room, shouting. Balzac used to wander through the streets bareheaded, clad in a dressing-gown and slippers. I just curse a bit and sit down at the typewriter.

Now, what I am driving at is this. Unless something is done about it eftsoones or right speedily, my biography is going to be a washout of the worst description. And, of course, there will be a biography. Everybody has one nowadays. Every day, when you open the literary supplement of your paper, you see among Books Received the announcement of the publication of "The Life and Letters of George W. Gubbs", or "The Real Otis Boole", or "Elmer Quackenboss Phipps as I Knew Him". Nobody has ever heard of these people before, and nobody wants to hear about them now,

but the biographer has gone grimly about his work just the same. And the chances are that, if you go to the length of reading one of these volumes, you will find that all Otis or George or Elmer did was to graduate at the Lemuel Sigsbee Technical University of Southern Carolina and, in after years, to contribute to the papers of the Schenectady Mutual Improvement Association a pamphlet on "Some Vagaries in the Fin Development of the Common Sardine".

So that one may be certain that, since these modest comforts are within the reach of all, I shall have my biography all right: and the thought makes me sorry for my biographer. He will begin, no doubt, by looking through such diaries as I have kept. For the chapter on "Early Days" he will consult the one I started as a boy, and will build up his chapter on such entries as the following:

Jan. 1. Have resolved to keep a diary and to set down every day all the important and interesting events which happen to myself and my friends. In this way I shall have a complete record of my life. It will be interesting to read in after years and Uncle John says it will form a useful mental discipline. Wet day today. Nothing happened.

Jan. 2 Wet day. Nothing happened.
Jan. 3 Still cloudy. Nothing happened.
Jan. 4 Fine. Nothing happened.
Aug. 9 Nothing happened.
Nov. 8 Nothing happened.

That, except for an entry on December 4—"Met J. B. Asked him about T. It isn't true about D. W.",—is all he will have to go upon when writing up my life to the age of twenty-seven.

He will not even be able to pad the thing out with anecdotes. Most biographers, when their material runs thin, are able to carry on for a page or so with stories about the celebrities whom their hero met and the good things they said. We read, for instance, that "Blank never wearied of telling the story of the Bishop of Toledo, under whose influence he came at this period and whose powerful personality exercised so marked an effect on his character at the most plastic stage of his life. The Bishop, it seems,—then a young and nervous clergyman,—was invited to breakfast by a high dignitary of the church. 'I am afraid', said his host, as the meal progressed, 'that your egg is bad.' 'Oh, no, my lord', replied the future bishop with the ingratiating smile that was to win him so many converts in his missionary work in the Far East, 'parts of it are excellent!' This was always one of Blank's favorite stories."

You can spin this sort of thing out for pages—but not in my biography. None of the celebrities I have met have ever said a good thing. As a matter of fact, celebrities have rather kept out of my way—I don't know why. I am perfectly ready to meet them, but there seems to be no enthusiasm at their end.

Not only does nothing ever happen to me: it does not even happen to my animals. The cat that rouses the household during a fire in the night and saves nine, is never my cat. The hen that kills garter-snakes in defense of its young is never part of the personnel of my poultry yard. Even the dog that goes mad and has to be shot by a policeman has had its license paid by someone else. I seem to shed a miasma of dulness around me, which afflicts even the animal kingdom.

I don't want to seem to be complaining. After all, it is nobody's fault but my own. It was perfectly open to me to run away to sea if I had wanted to, and every state in the union maintains a police force that would have been charmed to insert me in the cooler had I shown any signs of meet-

ing them half-way. I am not grumbling. I have set forth these personal defects of mine simply because I see a way of remedying them. I am merely leading up to the suggestion that it would be an excellent thing for myself and others in my position if someone were to start a bureau for supplying incidents to uneventful lives. Chesterton had the right idea in his Club of Queer Trades. One of his stories, if you remember, dealt with the strange adventures of a certain Major Brown. The major, looking over his wall one day into the next garden, saw a man planting pansies to form the words "Death to Major Brown!" Later, just outside his door, a manhole opened, a head emerged, and a sinister voice cried, "Major Brown, how did the jackal die?" Still later, in his own cellar, a massive brute grappled with him and nearly strangled him. Inquiries revealed the fact that the innocent major had been supplied with the adventures ordered by another man of the same name from a firm that supplied serial stories in real life to their clients.

There is surely an opening for such a firm outside fiction. Nobody wants his existence to be one long movie-serial, but still a touch of the stuff that made Pauline famous would help a lot. I don't want actually to be sitting in a room under which somebody has stored dynamite at the moment when the stuff is touched off, but I do feel it would give my biographer a better chance if someone would arrange that an explosion should happen just after I had gone out. Nothing could be simpler for a properly organized firm than to supply material of this kind: and the moment has arrived for such a firm to come into being. Biographers need it.

The incident-supplying firm would, of course, have to run an anecdotal department as a side-line, with which would be incorporated a department for supplying biographers with letters. The public that reads biographies insists upon plenty of letters, and the average letter is so dull. You cannot hold your reader in these days of rush and hurry with a lot of letters like the strong one you wrote to the grocer about the bacon, or the one in which you accepted the Joneses' invitation to dinner and progressive whist.

Photographs, again. If there is one thing that is always demanded by people who want to write stuff about you, it is a photograph: and the trouble about most authors is that nature never really intended them to be photographed. I am no Adonis myself, but you should see some of the others. During the recent actors' strike, I attended meetings of playwrights, and was enabled to see these men of brain in the mass. An appalling sight! And yet every one of them was doubtless called upon to supply his photograph to the papers several times a year. It is not fair to the writer or to the public. One of the principal departments of the bureau which I should like to see come into existence would be the one which looked after authors' photographs. There would be on the staff a number of young and handsome men whose duty it would be to be photographed instead of their clients. When some human gargoyle with a large head but an ingrowing face had put over a best seller, and the papers were clamoring for pictures of him, he would simply call up the bureau and put the matter in their hands. The consequences would be that, instead of wondering how on earth the picture of Amos, the educated ape from the Hippodrome,

had managed to get itself onto the Books and Readers page, you would see something that really looked like something.

The more I think of this bureau, the more clearly do I see that it must be founded, and founded quick. I need it in my business. In a day or two those Strenuous Life people will be growing impatient for the personal details of a picturesque nature, which they requested in such an optimistic spirit. I want about three good, snappy adventures for my early manhood, a couple of straight comic anecdotes, and something really interesting about what the Kaiser said to me in 1912.

THE ART OF THE NOVEL

BY FRANK SWINNERTON

THERE are so many conflicting views nowadays upon the art of the novel that one hesitates to add to their number by setting down a further series of opinions. And yet the novel offers in itself a field so wide for the exercise of the critical impulse that one who writes novels may be forgiven for enlarging upon some details of the novelist's craft. Those who write novels *ought* occasionally to express their views. For one thing, it is still popularly believed that novel-writing is not an art at all. For another, the word *art* is by periodical reviewers thrown at negligible works with such readiness that there is a danger of its being applied to anything and almost everything that is imaginatively and emotionally sterile. Emotional and imaginative sterility is the shortcoming of many modern practitioners in all the arts—among painters, composers, poets, and novelists one every week sees poverty of inspiration illuminated afresh by technical efficiency, until one is inclined to develop distrust of the modern artist as a type, and to believe him lacking in that precious originality from which all genuine pioneer work springs. Art, that is to say, is often a name given to mere refinement of ways and means, to avoidances, to timidities. The word is in such a bad way that something should be done to rehabilitate it by wiser and more selective use.

As applied to the novel it almost always involves praise of form and perfection of finish. A book that preserves the unities will always be rewarded by admiration, whatever its intrinsic qualities or defects. We are more likely to suppose that an author is an artist if he writes well. We are more likely to praise him for his art if he takes a small subject and projects it with all its aspects searched and rendered with consummate skill. A man with a looser imagination, a larger theme, who magnificently fails here and triumphs there, may astound and move us; but we do not speak of him as an artist. We may say that he is a "great and irregular genius"; but we expressly decline to use the word *art* in relation to his work.

Always, in contemporary criticism, at any rate, "art" means a small thing perfectly done. This is not at all as it should be. We may have the "Princesse de Clèves" in mind, or "Adolphe", or a novel by Turgenev; but if we limit the meaning of the word *art* to that which has perfection of form and no vehement rush of imagination, we shall be encouraging our novelists to believe in the small thing, and to dread altogether the experiment of dealing with a large theme and with emotions more passionate in their expression than the general texture of a refined and delicate work will allow. It is essential that in refined work the emotional interest should be subdued and manifested only in the most simple and poignant manner possible. To attempt otherwise would be as though one should serve a piece of raw steak *pâté de foie gras.*

In reaction from this sterilizing conception of art, there is a kind of critic who insists upon the necessity for breadth of subject and treatment, no matter how the work as a whole may fail in producing a general effect of organic life. We get from such a critic exhortations to our novelists to forsake the "small", and attempt great canvases of disorderly scenes and panoramic pictures of life in action. The world is ransacked for long novels, and the number of words in each of them is feverishly computed and extolled; as though length and breadth in themselves were the sole things to be admired and emulated. Upon such a critic one might retort that among all the lengthier romances of the Abbé Prévost, one single masterpiece—"Manon Lescaut"—shines like a star. If there be any validity in the test of enduring fame and repute, this surely is an example to be remembered as a warning by all who praise the long book as such. And yet the huge works of Dostoyevsky, written as they are by one who created in "Poor Folk" an extraordinary miniature, are unquestionably greater than the master's early triumph in the simple style. One would rather read and admire Balzac's "Les Parents Pauvres" than a minor bloodless work by one more technically scrupulous.

Obviously, therefore, while one may obtain from perfection of technique an acute pleasure, one must be able to appreciate some other quality in a novelist as of equal or even higher value. One ought to be able to read "Persuasion" and "Wuthering Heights" and "The Old Wives' Tales" and "La Chartreuse de Parme" with the power to recognize the quality peculiar to each. It is neither length nor brevity, neither largeness nor smallness, neither grandeur nor scrupulousness, that makes a novel rise above its fellows. We should have another touchstone. "Adolphe", for example, is almost unbearably tragic; but "Under the Greenwood Tree", a slight comedy, is also a masterpiece; "Emma" and "The Brothers Karamazov" and "Madame Bovary" must all be susceptible to our preferred solvent. Each in its way is a masterpiece incomparable. Each bears the mark of the author's genius in a manner so clearly to be recognized that to ignore it would be to commit a gross error of judgment.

At this point it would be easy to abandon the quest for a solvent of any kind; and to say that it is impossible to find a term which would embrace works so various in style and subject. It would be easier always to abandon a determination than to pursue it through the thickets of prejudice and temperamental difficulty which grow

upon every hand. We shall, however, reach a conclusion more satisfactory by trying to analyze the characteristics of enduring work in any genre; and we may even hope to avoid the forcing of any particular book into a mold or formula the insufficiency of which the next comer in the critical press can successfully question and betray.

Let us try and solve one question first. It is the question of aim. Clearly, among English novelists, Richardson and Meredith and Thomas Hardy have each conceived the novel as something distinct. Equally, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, and Turgenev had different conceptions of what the novel should be; and Balzac, Stendhal, and Flaubert pursued objects demonstrably separate from one another. I have deliberately chosen three writers from each of the three great novel-writing nations, because one must be able to see that even among writers of the same nation there have been great divergences. These divergences are so considerable as to render more and more difficult the discovery of a formula wide enough and simple enough to embrace all. The question is complicated by language, by difference of period, by difference of experience, and by fundamental difference of nature. Later writers, it is true, tend to show the influence of earlier writers in the same tongue. But where one novelist stands out among his contemporaries it is generally in virtue of difference from them, and where he assumes distinct rank among the novelists of his country it is because his debt to predecessors is infinitesimal. There are few exact parallels among novelists whose fame at this time is unquestioned. When one sees a critic trying to draw such a parallel, to say So-and-so is the French Such-and-such, one immediately is aware of unlikenesses that altogether outweigh any superficial resemblance. It should therefore be enough to say that work takes its rank and persists in literature by its originality.

It is originality and nothing else whatever that is the intimate touchstone of the good in any art. Not "queerness" or eccentricity; not defiance of accepted standards; but originality pure and simple. A work may reach a high pitch of executive skill, but it surely dies if it does not stand alone as a unique product. Writers who impress for a day or a season often do so because they reflect current taste. Only the original writer continues beyond his season as a master; and the reason of his continuance is always that he has seen life clearly for himself. That is the cause of an extraordinary perplexity in contemporary judgments. That is the final justification of the trite phrase, "we are still too near". It is as though runners in a great race should be bunched until the last lap, when the leader triumphantly emerges and wins by superior speed and stamina.

Let us turn, then, to the question of aim. When we admire the early novel it is for some singular primitive quality—a simplicity beautiful in itself, flat and sharp, without horizons, but with a strange and lovely intimacy. I have in mind, among novels, "La Princesse de Clèves", because that book, to be properly understood, must be read in relation to the life led by its author. To ignore her social position would be to miss the book's significance. The art of "La Princesse de Clèves" seems to me to be less than the art of, say, "Ethan Frome", because it is unconscious, and a part of

the natural refinement of Madame Lafayette. Most of the other early novelists were writers of lengthy works full of *longueurs* and bad places. It was not a conscious æsthetic aim that directed the primitive novelists; their survival is due as a rule to their knowledge of human nature rather than to any clear understanding of something that was the "novel". It was not, in England, until the end of the eighteenth century that a definite conception of what was proper to a novel grew and developed in the work of Jane Austen. The great English novelists, both Richardson and Fielding, could have sacrificed great masses of writing without loss. Quite differently was it with Jane Austen, whose works are for the first time obedient to a thought of perfection.

Jane Austen sacrificed to this perfection most of what was romantic; but she did not lose anything that had hitherto found a place in the English novel. All the great English novels before Jane Austen had been realistic. That was their keynote. She continued the tradition. Romance did not arise in English fiction before Scott and the Brontës. It is therefore absurd to talk, as some critics do, as though Jane Austen had been guilty of timidity. She certainly was not as broad, as male, as Fielding; but she was not a coward. She simply painted miniatures. She was an original.

The other early novelists were all different from Jane Austen. They were mostly talkers, voluminous and entertaining, but wise in the knowledge and exemplification of human beings and their affairs. They were great improvisers. They did not see their novels as wholes and follow inexorably to the end their deliberate conceptions, formed before their books were begun. Imagination they showed, supremely, in scenes; but not in entire books. Even that great novelist Stendhal will amuse all modern readers by saying, in the midst of vital scenes, "I forgot to tell you—" something that is essential to an understanding of what goes forward. The scrupulousness of Jane Austen had no likeness in France until it was developed almost into a mania by Flaubert, who was certainly the most deliberate "artist" who has ever used the novel for the expression of his genius. That art, therefore, which is associated with conscious creation, as opposed to the delightful spontaneous effervescence of the earlier novelists, must be regarded as the distinctive feature of purely modern writing. It is composition, it is the work of grown-ups. Novelists, ceasing to be children, began to say to themselves here and there in the nineteenth century: "I am going to write a book about—not simply this and that, and whatever turns up; but about a set of characters and circumstances which I can definitely forecast before a word is written". In his later work Dickens did that. He was not alone. French writers had preceded him; and English writers were beginning to arise who carried such a conception of the novel much further.

Take one illustration. "Tom Jones" is described by its author as "The History of a Foundling". Mr. Hardy gave "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" the subtitle, "The Story of a Pure Woman". There is all the difference in the world between the two things. Again, nobody before Meredith would have thought of writing a novel called "The Egoist". Henry Mackenzie had called his book "A Man of Feeling"; but that was to justify a wash of sentiment. The mere title, "The Egoist", is boastful of deliberate

artistic intention. From the merry irony of Jane Austen, who saw in manners material for her pen, to the definite intellectual and imaginative conception of such a book as "The Egoist", is again a long way. It shows that conscious art is intellectual in development; and in showing us that, it shows us also how sterility in fiction grows from the use of intellect without imagination.

I suggest, then, that the word *art*, as it is applied to the novel, implies design. It implies first of all an imaginative conception of the whole. It implies, further, that the execution of the work is throughout in harmony with the conception. It implies measure, or what the French call *justesse*. But it does not imply neatness. Neatness is something which can be attained by practice. Technical skill is not art, but simply the result of shrewdness and experience. The artist is that original creature who, as Hazlitt long ago said, feels himself "strong enough to go alone". Given the originality, and the power to imagine a work; the power thereafter proportionately to design its features, and the power to execute the work in accord with the design, the artist has the world at hand for his subject-matter. That such an artist perhaps has only once existed is a misfortune; but we need not distress ourselves overmuch in thought of what we have missed. It will be enough to say that while originality and the power to imagine largely and loosely are the common property of all great novelists of the past, the observance of general conception and precise design is a peculiarity of the modern novel. The enormous designs of Dostoyevsky, his extraordinary imaginative gift, and the extreme power which he has of visualizing and vitalizing particular scenes, give to his novels an air of being the most astounding works in that form ever written. But Dostoyevsky lacks measure. His works are like delirious dreams, huge and hysterical. Their scale is so large, their tumultuous pressure of excitement and psychological analysis is so great, that we are carried right away into enthusiasm. We are agitated and moved. But they are unstinted: as I have said, they have no "measure". They do not resolve themselves, in our memory, into harmony with the universe.

Stendhal, remorseless and romantic as he simultaneously is, meets the demand of our definition no more exactly. His books are strange and wonderful adventures for us; but they are great combinations of tale and analysis, and not works of art precious in their integrity. Only, I should suggest, in the very finest novel of Thomas Hardy, do we encounter the qualities which have been defined as constituting a work of creative art. These masterpieces have a very beautiful simplicity; but it is not the simplicity of naïveté. It is the simplicity that comes from unusual imagination tempered by unusual intellectual power. In the novels of Mr. Hardy we can see how this intellectual power gives form to imaginative concepts. In his finest works his sense of form, which is to say his judgment of æsthetic propriety, is unfailing. He, among all European novelists, is the one who has most definitely raised the novel to the plane of art. He is the one English novelist to whom the application of the term *artist* would not be denied. He is an original, as his forerunners were originals; but he has also been gifted with the power to conceive and to build. That the scale of his novels varies proves his versa-

tility; but their excellence is such as to throw suddenly into absurdity all those critical canons and their auxiliary beliefs which are headed by the merely crude reverence for and timid observance of the unities. There is no sterile observation of critical rules in Mr. Hardy's books. They are as spontaneous as the work of the primitives; but they have that clarification of imaginative vigor by disciplined intellectual power which is the mark of a work of art. Nothing is done in them without relevance. Nothing is done without relation to the larger world outside their canvas. Nothing from the outer world disturbs their single concern with poignant themes.

Besides Mr. Hardy, no English writer of fiction has possessed in so abounding a measure the gifts that produce great art. We have had other novelists of genius, of exemplary skill, of delicious quality. In general, however, our novelists have been great originals without complete control of their own rich possessions, or they have been admirable and consummate craftsmen. It is useless to extol craft as art. Craft is skill carried to a high pitch; but, in general, craft is a wonderfully thrifty employment of finite talent. Art is a bridling of imagination, of infinite talent. It is a discipline. The two things are absolutely distinct, and any confusion of them is to be deplored.

This rather summary attempt to reach a conclusion regarding the "art of the novel" does not supply us with a solvent which shall be applicable to all the great novels of Europe; but we have at least mentioned one quality —the greatest—which is common to them all. This quality is that of originality. Another quality is the knowledge of human nature and its exemplification without which no novel can interest a generation subsequent to the one for which it was written. And in general, apart from later writers, the narrative power of our most notable novelists has generally been enormous. The tale-telling gift is not rare in children. It is the faculty of amusing one's self and amusing others. When it is preserved in the grown-up it compels the possessor to some form of creative work. Most of our good second-rate contemporary work resembles, therefore, the work of the great novelists of the past in being the result of a childish faculty continued inexplicably into adult life. It is to this faculty that we owe tales that keep engrossed both old and young of both sexes. The tales grow from the spontaneous narrative gift. A kind of skill comes from testing the effects of improvisation upon hearers and readers, the effects upon the author himself. Humor, gusto, the power to write graphically; and novels are made, have been made since prose fiction became an accepted literary form.

When novelists reach a further, and critical stage, they are bordering upon the domain of art. In such cases, when judgment has arisen, and when it has brought selection to strongly imagined scenes, art arises. We may see the effect in many of the most celebrated novels of classic origin. In Mr. Hardy's case judgment has been there all the time, from "Under the Greenwood Tree" onward. But simultaneously with the triumph of judgment has come a diminution of the inventive faculty. We no longer produce without effort the splendid tales that sprang from the nursery of the novel. It is through the decline of the inventive faculty that sterility has fallen upon the modern novel. What was conscious intellectual selection in

Mr. Hardy and his fellow innovators in the novel, has become almost a mechanical process in his successors. We have had the novel upon a thesis, the novel upon a type, and we are still having examples of each type, to excess. Originality is always rare; novels are numerous; the deliberate plan in what should be imaginative work has become vicious and sophisticated. Now there should be a change, if our novels are to remain more than lifeless bodies of works and invented scenes and characters. However wonderful, and however mysterious, art may be, craft when it rises above every other gift, inevitably implies poverty within; and from imaginative and inventive poverty not even the most scrupulous technical accomplishment can extract anything but sterility and disappointment. To call this extraction, however painful, by the mystic name of "art" is to create a new and false valuation, and to rob an imperfectly defined term of whatever significance it may retain after its malhandling by marauding critics.

ON REREADING "LE MORTE D'ARTHUR"

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

HERE learn who will the art of noble words,
If he may snatch the secret the words keep
Of speech like new-sprung grass to nibbling herds,
Yet old as graves of long-forgotten sleep;
Bright as young joy, yet with a heart as deep
As those old wells of tears that never dry;
Alike for those who laugh or those who weep
Friendly of face as is the morning sky,
Bannered with bloom-tipt clouds lullingly moving by.

Like some green glade in middle of the wood,
Buttressed with beech and oak and arched with bowers,
Spreads the old tale in nature's amplitude,
And many a grassy corner blue with flowers;
Anon uprears a castle grim with towers,
Anon a horn is blown, in silken weeds
A lonely lady, fairer far than ours,
On a white palfrey rides, anon there speeds
A knight with vizor down, intent on flaming deeds.

Here, by a well—beware her woven charms—
A faery woman sits and softly sings,
White as shed blossom are her beckoning arms,
And in her eyes a thousand vanished springs;
She lies in wait to snare the youth of kings,

On their fair strength is all her whiteness fed,
A joy like honey in the mouth she brings,
Yet whoso tasteth it is surely sped
Down to the hollow halls of the dishonoured dead.

Of all within this Forest Perilous
Hight is the world, there is no thing to fear
Deadly as she, no giant Orgulous,
No Questing Beast, or no illustrious spear;
Yea! though the Hundred Knights should draw anear,
Better, with lance in rest, it were to fall
Than to her lonely singing to give ear;
Fame hath a voice more nobly musical,
And thus to dare to die is scarce to die at all.

Old book that still hath such a morning face,
Dust are old eyes that read thee, yet no dust
Is on the page they read; for thee no place
Where dim Oblivion turneth all to rust,
And later scrolls diurnally are thrust;
But thou of Youth art still the very friend,
And Age grows Youth to read thee—such a gust
Dwells in the glamoured page o'er which we bend,
And still we sigh that the old tale, like life, must end.

I read thee, like my fellows, in the morn,
And now the westering sun begins to throw
A pathos o'er the realm where I was born,
Touching with fire old fanes of long ago,
Reanimating with a charmèd glow
Memories dim and faces fled away—
I hear again thy bannered trumpets blow,
And fall a-dream on that heraldic day
When I was a young knight and she a little may.

Gone! and yet here forever still abide,
Stored as in music, all the aching joy
And glory of young hearts that, side by side,
Beat on when she was girl and I was boy,
And the Round Table, and the Siege of Troy,
And Roland's Song, and the far wandering seas
Round Jason's keel, and all the long employ
Of Hercules, were our realities—
Nor had we doubt to find, we two, the Hesperides.

Yea! this old book, as others writ of old,
And writ forever, like a palimpsest,
Is overwrit with other words of gold,
Though marring not the meaning of the rest:
The words low uttered when two lovers pressed

Hot cheeks together o'er the tear-stained tale,
And the long secret was at last confessed,
And twilight wove for love a starry veil,
And silence was all speech—save for the nightingale.

Would we who write in this thought-burdened day
Seek for our words endurance such as this,
Have unborn lovers read us even as they
That read of Launcelot—then dared to kiss,
And blessed the magic book that wrought their bliss,
Forgot a moment, but remembered ever—
Somewhere in this old book the secret is:
No more, perchance, though some shall find it never,
Than—wouldst be immortal, be thou not too clever.

This too—the golden increment of Time—
Mark in these noble books that never die:
A mystic ripening, be it prose or rhyme,
With deeper meanings, as the years go by,
Something not there for the first reader's eye;
As though even books were part of Nature's scheme,
And, with the suns, drew something from the sky,
Thrilling with subtler sense the simple theme,
Broadening to vaster scope the artless early dream.

So, he of Mancha on his sorry steed,
Tilting at windmills, and his fellow fool,
Seemed not at first as now for us who read—
For Man hath since so often gone to school—
And, as the weathering years make beautiful
Old stone beyond the builder's first intent,
An art of Time, past reach of skill or tool,
Makes of his book more than its author meant,
And a quaint tale becomes a people's monument.

Yet, 'tis enough the tale as first was told,
Read with a boy's hot heart, or with a mind
To watch the blazoned narrative unfold,
And of the simple words the magic find,
Watch the art that leaves no clue behind:
Sudden as sunshine on a grassy place,
Mark how this pen, with art as undesigned,
Writes but a name, and lo! the lovely face
Of La Beale Isoud blooms with death-defying grace.

Though Gawaine's skull, and the old Table Round,
And Cradok's mantle, and Sir Launcelot
His sword—beheld of Caxton—now be found
No more at Winchester or Camelot;
And Arthur's seal, as Arthur's self, is not,

And all the lovely queens are even as they,
  And Orkney hath no memory of King Lot;
And all the magic art of Nimue
Be spent, and even Merlin's dust be blown away;

Here live they still, as in that mirrored spring—
  With life's own colours on them, clear to see—
Where Palomides, gazing, gan to sing
  Of Isoud, for whose sake all gaunt was he,
  And dared to tell Sir Tristram love was free,
And Isoud his to love, though ne'er to win,
  As any man's—though he Sir Tristram be. . . .
Ah! noble paynim, long since chrismed of sin,
When Tristram to Christ's font, brother-like, led thee in!

"Go", said Isoud, "and tell Queen Guenevere,
  That in the world there be true lovers four:
She and Sir Launcelot, and Sir Tristram here,
  And I, Isoud, and on the earth no more"—
  Proud boast ensuing Time hath not outwore,
Still, like a rose upon her lips, you brave
  A world unfriend to lovers as of yore—
Writ was the whole of love the hour you gave
The golden cup to Tristram, golden to the grave.

And, in the shock of times that shake the world,
  I hear no thunder in the wars men wage
As when Sir Tristram on Sir Marhaus hurled—
  Writ is the whole of battle in that page;
  Yet, whatso'er of glory gilds the rage
Of metal, soulless, upon metal flung,
  Springs from this noble England's heritage,
This book of England's knights in England's tongue,
When her great speech and her great heart alike were young.

Nor, when man's heart beneath the Unseen bows,
  And the dread holiness that hidden dwells
In being bends the knee, and in God's house
  A light passes, and the sound of mystic bells,
  And man is ware of opening heavens and hells,
Shall he such vision have as the pure lad
  Of whose hushed quest the old romancer tells—
All, all is here, all lovely good and bad;
God too is in the book—with young Sir Galahad.

A NEW AND ENTERTAINING METHOD OF REVIEWING BOOKS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO THE PROFESSION

BY WILLIAM McFEE

OF course, the point of the joke is that the reviewer, in the present case, is not a reviewer at all, but, as described in a former article, a Lieutenant of Reserve. The regular blown-in-the-glass reviewers must not imagine that he is trying to do them out of a job. On the contrary, the most probable upshot will be that the regular, blown-in-the-glass style of reviewing books will be seen to hold the field if we are to get anywhere. For it is presumed that these gentlemen really are trying to get somewhere with their criticism, that they are shooting to kill, and not merely announcing new books. . . .

In the first place, I ought to confess that I envy the professional reviewer. It seems a lovely life. I figure him, seated in the monastic calm of a richly appointed library, the walls gleaming with the russet and blue and gold of leather bindings—gifts from wealthy authors in token of their gratitude; a bust of Plato behind the door on the Encyclopædia Britannica case; a broad heavy table covered with the reviews of two continents, and a pile of new books—for review. I figure him seated in his great chair, a man of noble forehead and deep discriminating eyes. His dress is rich yet disheveled, and he toys with a gold-tipped cigarette as he prepares his thoughts for transcription to the big pad of fine paper before him. He is rich and respectable. The silence of the great room is interrupted for a moment as his daughter, a being of matchless beauty, trips into the sanctum and, seated on the arm of his chair, covers his fine iron-gray head with her own tumbled golden tresses. He signs the check, of course, as I figure him, his left arm encircling the slender waist. Another moment, and she is gone. He smiles. This reviewer has a charming smile. He reaches for his note-pad and writes, still smiling. I look over his shoulder (in imagination). There is a golden hair on his coat. He has written: "True happiness consists in avoiding those who are getting more out of life than we are." He thinks he has thought of something new, and smiles again, deciding to bring it into the article he is about to write.

Now it is no abuse of language to say that, in the above picture of a reviewer, I am not describing myself. The present writer is neither rich nor respectable. His dress is the uncomfortable white uniform of a naval officer in the tropics, a uniform designed by a non-smoker, a non-reader, a non-writer, and a nonentity generally, I should say. Even the "big pad of fine white paper" is out of the picture in this case, for such a thing has not been seen on the ship for months. Indeed, it is quite on the cards that this article will be finished on a naval signal pad, which will cer-

tainly justify it as a novel way of reviewing books.

Nor is the "richly appointed library" to be found in our vicinity. In passing, it is humiliating to reflect how very few hours I have ever spent in richly appointed libraries. Some ships have libraries, it is true, securely locked up, so that you have to wait meekly upon some pug-nosed autocrat of a steward who stands just behind you, breathing down your neck, while you endeavor to find a congenial volume among the roach-ravened stacks of bygone best sellers. But our ship has no library save a mahogany cabinet in the chart-room containing some mysterious volumes bound in sheet-lead, so that when flung overboard to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, they will sink. Our ship has very little of anything, after the manner of ships in which the fittings, from the wireless to the engines, are of destroyer pattern. There is a legend that when anybody gets up in our ward-room, everybody else has to rise to let him move round. The letter-copying press is on the ice-chest, and the rifle-rack is bolted against the chronometer case. So there is no library. Therefore, when I was bitten with the notion that I wanted to write a book review, I decided to do it ashore.

To explain how a Lieutenant of Reserve, in Levantine waters, becomes possessed of anything to review, it should be said that the editor of this magazine, with the sagacity pertaining to editors, had sent over a bale of new publications, deeming it possible that said Lieutenant might go mad for lack of mental stimulus, and so bring shame to the ancient and honorable company of men of letters. A Maltee steward, suborned for the purpose, dumps these volumes into a canvas bag and goes ashore with them—leaving them in the care of my good friend M. Eskenazi, licensed money-changer, who has a microscopic Bureau de Change under the high arcades of the Passage Kraemer, which runs beneath the Hôtel Splendide Palace, and debouches upon the Rue Parallel. It is to this same lofty and multitudinous Passage Kraemer—when the westering sun, just before he sinks down and silhouettes Cordelio on the other side of the gulf, black against red-gold, sends his level, blinding rays from end to end of the arcades—that I repair, with pipe and note-book, and sit down at a particular table in a nook opposite the microscopic office of M. Eskenazi. He regards me through his pigeon-hole, and we exchange salutations as I call the waiter from the café behind me by clapping my hands.

M. Eskenazi is much occupied. While I am consuming a lemon-and-mint ice-cream, he sells some opium to the chief officer of a Japanese vessel; an ounce of hashish to a venerable old Russian with quavery knees and an incredibly fine panama hat; and two postal-cards to a petty officer of an Italian battleship. He changes two one-pound notes into Turkish paper for a naval officer from our flag-ship; advises a shady-looking personage, who seems to be a Scandinavian, upon some recondite subject; shoos away sixteen small boys and girls who are begging round his window; and buys, for spot cash, a magnificent pair of German prismatic field-glasses from an individual who has evidently not washed for weeks, and who probably stole them from the dead body of some Turkish officer lying under a cloud of vultures in the gorges of the mountains behind the city. And all the while the people of

Smyrna pass to and fro in throngs; rich and poor, high and low, Gentile, Jew and Greek, Ottoman, Armenian, Balkan and Muscovite, Latin, Levantine and Teuton, young and old, virtuous, and so forth—a motley swarm. Here then is the correct milieu, to my mind, for the reviewing of books—a seat at a café in the very heart of the city, a front stall in the great theatre of life.

M. Eskenazi, seizing the opportunity afforded by a lull in his multifarious dealings, comes over smiling, the canvas bag in his hand, to drink his mastic and discuss the news. The Turkish pound is down again, he remarks pensively, by which he means that said Turkish pound, worth four dollars in 1914 and a dollar-twenty-five yesterday, has dropped to a dollar fifteen. Silently I hand him a few English notes, and he goes over and extracts the current exchange from a small but formidable safe buried under a heap of Persian mats. I am his friend, he says, so he gives me the benefit of his knowledge. Money-changers, and Jewish money-changers in particular, seem to have a bad name in history. I recall an incident in the temple at Jerusalem. . . Personally I prefer them to Pharisees. M. Eskenazi is a Jewish money-changer. His ancestors fled from Toledo in Torquemada's day and settled here in Smyrna, where the benighted Ottomans suffered them to dwell and prosper. He speaks Spanish in his home, English to me, French, Greek, Turkish, and Armenian in his business. He resembles a composite portrait of Lord Kitchener and the Earl of Derby, and is a most entertaining companion.

M. Eskenazi enters with zest into my plan for reviewing books out in the open, as it were, for he imagines that thereby I am earning immense sums of money. He understands money. He knows a great many ways of making money. This writing business intrigues him. It is, to him, a novel idea. They actually pay you for it, he murmurs. An extraordinary country, America! What gets him is that, in America, an editor can pay money. Now here, an editor is on the same social and financial plane as a shoe-shine boy or an itinerant peanut vender. He is forever behind with his rent. He spends much of his time in jail, for attacking the government, or the powers, or because he cannot pay his debts. He is a shadowy creature, having no continuous abode. His journals have their day, and cease to be. A small hand-printing press, a bale of dirty-white paper, and a tin trunk full of miscellaneous Hellenic, Ottoman, and Latin type, all piled on a donkey cart—and he is away to a distant quarter of the city to start life afresh. He resembles a Bolshevik who has got out of touch with the treasury department. In summer he wears an unfortunate suit of near-linen and a battered straw hat; in winter a mangy rabbit-fur-lined coat and a derby. When I tell M. Eskenazi that some editors in America earn as much as a dollar a day and are received in society, he is astounded. Evidently a country of illimitable resources. He finishes his mastic, lights a cigarette, and hurries over to attend to two customers, while I open the canvas bag and examine, one by one, the books I am about to review.

It seems almost to savor of magic, after our discussion of money, to draw out first (and quite unwittingly) "Midas and Son" by Stephen McKenna. The easy, sumptuous, and rapid modern style of Mr. McKenna depends for its success upon a strong,

non-literary central idea. I mean, no one would read this sort of book for its style alone. As far as I can make out there is no such central idea in "Midas and Son" as there undoubtedly was in "Sonia". "Sonia" was a remarkable book in many ways; not the least remarkable being the cool revelation of graft as practised among the patrician English. It was a picture, not only of two contrasted Englands, but of two violently antagonistic social forces at work in a disintegrating community. Such a book is bound to be interesting. But a book which has for its theme simply immense wealth cannot be interesting. Money in itself is the most uninteresting subject on earth. M. Eskenazi is of this opinion. I have gathered from him that granted even if money does talk, which he doubts, its conversation is not entertaining out of office hours. Money, he holds, is an admirable servant and an abominable master. And one does not take an absorbing interest in servants.

Apart from this, as I watch the cosmopolitan throng surge to and fro through the Passage Kraemer, as I note our esteemed admiral shaking hands with an equally esteemed Italian general at the entrance of the Hôtel Splendide Palace, it occurs to me that this latest book of Mr. McKenna's is a good example of the sort of fiction we got used to during the war. Perhaps the last of its race. It is nervous in accomplishment. One gets "rattled", at times, reading it. It is obviously the work of a member of the cultured governing classes. Intensely dramatic moments are hurried over—not because they are inartistic, but because the behavior of the characters has become repugnant to the good form of the cultured governing classes. And it carries on what seems to have become almost a craze with some novelists—the habit of introducing characters from previous novels. M. Eskenazi cannot assist me much here, but I am inclined to believe his ethics would not admit this sort of thing in trade. One would think, too, when a novel is finished, that an author would be only too glad to turn his characters out of doors, to shift for themselves. If I had been consulted about the League of Nations, I should certainly have stood out for a clause abolishing trilogies. . . . But of course this is no way of reviewing books.

M. Eskenazi, I observe, is accommodating two lengthy bluejackets in American uniform, as I draw out another volume, which proves to be Cecil Chesterton's "History of the United States". M. Eskenazi has a high opinion of the United States navy. An American battleship in the harbor, with fourteen hundred men on board, has been of considerable profit to him as a vender of Turkish carpets, Persian rugs, and so forth. He says the American naval man has two shining qualities—he has money to spend, and he spends it. They certainly satisfy the eye, these husky leathernecks, in their spotless rig and with their extremely brown faces and candid eyes. I feel very glad that an Englishman has at length been found who considered the history of the United States worth writing about. If some modern Diogenes, instead of wandering round looking for such a common object as an honest man, had tried to find an Englishman who had read the history of the United States, he would have had to give up in despair.

There is an additional reason for gratitude. Ever since G. K. Chesterton wrote "A Short History of England", I have been terrified lest he

should deal the United States the same devastating blow. I have a theory that Cecil, who had been to America, pleaded with his more famous brother to spare a young and confiding nation, to give them a chance, and that G. K. C., with magnificent generosity, consented!

For if he had written this book it would have been all wrong. Without yielding to anybody on earth in my admiration for G. K. Chesterton (Did I not discover him in "The Saturday Daily News" nearly twenty years ago?), I am quite sure there is nobody on earth less fitted to understand or write about the United States. Cecil Chesterton, on the other hand, was just the man. The book is advertised in England as "the ideal short history for the general reader". It is just that. American readers must remember that the "general reader" in England has never heard of the Kuklux Klan or Mason and Dixon's Line. His ideas of a chautauqua are as vague as his conception of a barbecue or a picayune. The phrases "native son", "creole", "carpet-bagger", "hoosier" and so on, mean nothing to him. The famous "James boys" and the equally famous brothers William and Henry James, are all one to him. Daniel Webster, he believes, wrote a dictionary. Well, if he didn't, what about it? Nevertheless, this same "general reader" in England, whom I ask Americans to pity as they would pity a denizen of Central China or the Congo, has some sparks of good in him. He is not altogether unregenerate. He hasn't had a chance, so far. Henry the Eighth's wives and the Boston Tea Party have been too much for him. Even now he has an uneasy notion that he is not well informed about this nation across the sea which, in such an incredibly brief period, trained and equipped and flung nineteen hundred thousand men into France to aid us, in the hour of our terrible need, to hold and throttle and beat the ugly life out of the barbarian hordes. He has heard somewhere that these men are of his own race. And now here is a book, written by a private in the British army in a splendidly clear and forcible style, a style such as G. K. Chesterton might write if he were only content to let words *speak*, instead of making them do ground and lofty tumbling, as well. The outlook for the general reader is bright. I look forward to referring casually, in English company, to Aaron Burr or the battle of New Orleans, without being confronted by that icy stare of non-comprehension which is one of the marvels of our island story.

Apropos of this, the very next book I fish out of my canvas bag is Robert Cortes Holliday's "Walking-Stick Papers". Here, as Squeers remarked, is richness. It used to be a brag of mine, in the days when I was a drummer in Merrie England, that I could not only design and build an engine, but I could sell it afterward. Mr. Holliday has sold books as well as written them. I like this sort of thing. The great trouble with so many of our literary men is that they can't do anything else. And it is one of the peculiarities of the artist and the saint that their equipment comes by other roads. George Moore, who is of course an artist and not a saint, seems to reckon his career in Paris as a painter a sad failure. It seems to me, after an attentive and admiring study of his works, that he owes as much to his training as a painter as to his early experiences as a stable boy in his father's stud. But apart from the piquant flavor lent to the

"Walking-Stick Papers" by the author's experiences as a bookseller, the essays appeal to me because it is just this kind of writing which our younger men in England cannot do. There is a nimbleness of mind, a freedom from silly, mawkish, conventional forms which does not seem to flourish in our humid and chilly air. An Englishman never takes his collar off when he is writing. How can you expect him to show you his soul?

Another example of the same American genius for this literary gambolling comes out of the bag—Christopher Morley's "Rocking Horse". Comes out prancing and curveting, and neighing and shying—obviously at the bizarre surroundings of the Passage Kraemer, with its startling costumes and brilliant colors. Shys at more than this, for the rocking-horse, be it understood, is a domestic animal. Only respectable married folk keep rocking-horses. One recalls Hugh Walpole's laconic comment when Mr. Holliday said he was married. "All Americans are", murmered Mr. Walpole. And so it seems. Late last night at Costi's Restaurant in the Rue Malté, a party of young American naval officers one and all confessed that they were married. Which is most edifying, but has nothing to do with a review of books. What is left in the canvas bag?

John Keats has recorded his feelings in a famous sonnet when he discovered Chapman's "Homer", comparing his joy to that of some lonely watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken. It is a good metaphor but not good enough for me just now. At the risk of making an astronomical blunder, I prefer to call Ellen La Motte a star rather than a planet. It may not be so scientific but it is more polite and more true.

"Civilization", a collection of short stories dealing with the European in China, is one of those books which slip into circulation without a vast deal of clatter, and establish themselves firmly in the inner affections of a large number of people who know good work from bad. They do not become best sellers, as far as I am aware, and quite possibly the warm-hearted people who support best sellers may want to know just what there is in a book like "Civilization" to rouse such emotions among the *cognoscenti*. Alas! *cognoscenti* are always being pestered to give their reasons. Many *cognoscenti* have grown weary of explaining and remain in hiding, quietly enjoying the fruits of their enterprise. Of course, no such behavior is possible to a reviewer. He must tell why he likes a book or cease to be a reviewer. Well, the secret is a technical one, and it is called "atmosphere". How this atmosphere is produced, I don't quite know. If I did, I should produce it myself and so acquire an enduring fame. I admit this is not the correct sort of thing to say in a review. In England, at any rate, a reviewer invariably leaves on the mind of the reader a notion that he (the reviewer) could have written the book himself and written it better, with a further comforting assurance that he (the reader) could, with a little practice, do it too. In this way the reviewer is glorified, the reader is gratified, and the author, poor wight, is frequently tempted to commit suicide.

While I am reaching to the bottom of the canvas bag for the remaining volume, a young person appears among the hundreds of young persons passing to and fro, who is singularly apropos. She advances, and forestalling my intention, drags a

chair up to my table and sits down. I say she is singularly apropos, not only because she is a sight for sore eyes, but because the remaining book is Conrad's "Arrow of Gold". M. Eskenazi joins us during a lull in his affairs. I order ices, mastic, and coffee. We converse, while I turn once again the pages of Mr. Conrad's extraordinary romance. The newcomer does not speak English. Lest you should form an erroneous estimate of her qualifications as a heroine, let me add that in addition to her native Bulgarian she speaks French, German, Italian, Russian, Greek, Turkish, and Spanish. She regards the pile of books on the table without any discernible emotion. Books to her are nothing. She likes illustrated journals of fashions, especially *les modèles Américains*. Politics, as we know them, are nothing to her. Her orientation differs from ours. She loves the English, the Americans, and the Germans, and she hates the Greeks, the French, and the Armenians. She has never been farther north than Sophia, farther west than Athens, or farther east than Constantinople. Books to her are nothing. Yet her viewpoint is of value, since men to her are everything and out of men books are made. And being polite, she is good enough to inquire what is the book which I have in my hand. It is "The Arrow of Gold". And what is it about?

This places me in a quandary because, although I have read the book with attention, I am not at all clear what it is about. It is a dreadful confession for a confirmed and lifelong Conradian to make, but I have no clear notion of anything happening in the story. It is dreadful because, if there is one artist alive today who can actually, as Meredith Nicholson says, push a character through the door and let him speak for himself, it is Conrad. Many of his characters are going about today, for it is rational to assume that if an author's creations really are creations, one may easily meet them. I met several of them at a hotel in Malta. There was Kurtz, from "Heart of Darkness", not dead at all, in the full-dress uniform of a Russian imperial guardsman. There was Schomberg, disguised as a Swiss automobile salesman. There was Captain MacWhirr, from "Typhoon", in the uniform of the Royal Naval Reserve, breathing heavily at a table by himself, and remarking, when interrogated, that he had no remembrance of ever going through a typhoon. "We used to have dirty weather at times, of course", he murmered.

But most of the characters in "The Arrow of Gold" are too thin ever to materialize like that. As opposed to Miss La Motte's "Civilization" with its indubitable atmosphere and mastery of illusion, "The Arrow of Gold" seems to have been written designedly without atmosphere. The characters remain suspended in a kind of passionless ether. And this leads me to enunciate a daring theory—that Mr. Conrad, in this book, has endeavored to evoke some transient memories of a too-long-vanished past. There is always this danger besetting the artist, because some people and scenes seem to have the faculty of imposing themselves upon his imagination without bringing with them any adequate capacity for transmutation into terms of art. They are, if one may venture a phrase, brilliant and sterile phantoms. They are as vivid as a flash of lightning in the memory, yet one can do nothing with them. Such a figure is Doña Rita, in "The Arrow of Gold".

Such a place is the Street of the Consuls in Marseilles. One can see Mr. Conrad trying to galvanize her into some sort of life corresponding to the life of humanity, but she won't move. She does nothing comprehensible from beginning to end. She is a phantom. One never believes in Monsieur George's love for her at all. One struggles to visualize the original of this charming and exasperating being, seen in the dazzling sunlight of Marseilles—no sooner seen than gone.

So, too, with the Street of the Consuls. It reminds me of the Rue d'Aventure in Marseilles, which I beheld in the small hours, one night last winter. A high, narrow, hermetically sealed sort of street, with flag-poles sticking out of upper windows, and immense black doors that seemed closed for all eternity. It was bright moonlight and the line of shadow lay exactly down the middle of the roadway. I had an appointment with a torpedo lieutenant who spoke no French, and who had no notion of the position of our ship in the immense harbor. And as I stood at the top of this sombre and menacing street of adventure, a large rat crept out of the moonlit gutter and started along the street. And then another. After garbage. I stood entranced, for rats do not forage in the streets in England. And I became aware suddenly of someone who had managed to emerge from one of those immense and seemingly immovable portals—a figure in an opera cloak and French top-hat, and very drunk. A long white kid glove dangled from his hand, and he waved it gently toward me as he swayed across the street. All without a sound, save a fiacre rattling out of the Cannebière just beyond. Swayed into the middle of the street, where the shadow lay like something solid and impregnable, the fingers of the long white kid glove dragging on the ground—when he saw a rat, and giving a sudden lurch, vanished forever into the shadow. The fiacre rattled louder; and turning, I discovered the torpedo lieutenant inside of it, very relieved to find me after all.

Now here are the beginnings of tales like "The Arrow of Gold", tales founded upon vivid but unsubstantial memories. I shall never forget that man in the opera cloak with his preposterous air of mysterious gaiety and his long white kid glove. He will remain with me forever, an interesting, brilliant, and sterile phantom.

In the meanwhile I have been trying to explain to Elli, who is trying to understand, the essential psychology of Doña Rita, that elusive and shadowy being about whom, presumably, "The Arrow of Gold" is written. Doña Rita kept goats on the Spanish mountains when she was a child. Elli gets that with facility: she kept sheep and helped her mother on the hills near Sophia. Yes, bare-footed and bare-legged, looking down now for a moment at the high French heels of her white shoes. Well, then, Doña Rita is now rich and unhappy. Elli pronounces this to be incredible. *Pourquoi?* Does she not love that *homme de mer*, Monsieur George? Humph! She sets one elbow among the dishes and regards me attentively from under the brim of an immense straw hat trimmed with osprey. *Les hommes de mer*, she murmers, and looks away towards the kaleidoscopic procession passing through the Passage Kraemer. She forgets "The Arrow of Gold". Books are nothing to her, as I expect they were nothing to Doña Rita. And like Doña Rita she

is one of those beings who inspire love, who disturb the dim and ineluctable memories of the past, and who give to the most transient of our illusions the aspect of a grave resolution of the soul. "She was supremely lovable", says Monsieur George of Doña Rita, and therein he compresses the theme of the book. Perhaps it was an error to assume that none of these characters can walk the solid earth. Perhaps the arrow of gold finds its mark. Perhaps Doña Rita waits here, while I, *pauvre homme de mer*, restore the canvas bag of books to the care of M. Eskenazi.

So few women are "supremely lovable".

MR. VANITY FAIR

BY ROBERT C. BENCHLEY

AN editor may be known by the company he keeps waiting in his reception room.

The austere apartment, containing a panorama photograph of the ruins of the Roman Forum, and two gaffers waiting with brief-cases, usually bespeaks the presence within of an editor of the masonic school. At stated times he claps his hands thrice, and messengers from the outside world are ushered in, bearing manuscripts—the subject-matter of which has been imparted to the inspired authors through a series of annunciatory visions, in which it has been declared to them that they have been elected, from all the millions of the earth, to prepare an article on "Queen Victoria as I Knew Her", or a treatise entitled "America's Future, and Other Problems". Thus is a number of the magazine evolved—like a peace treaty—in the privacy of the sanctum, and no one who has not reached the age of fifty-five and been summoned to the narthex, knows the workings of the editorial mind—or the name of the editor.

On the other hand, there is the reception room which *is* a reception room, where one may find two-thirds of the town asking for the editor by name. Some are asking with that warm politeness which indicates the first visit, others have the assurance of old friends; but all seem to be fairly certain that, whether or not the impending interview is a professional failure, it will not be a bad way in which to while away the morning.

Concerning this editor the portents are equally clear. It may take him a little longer to get his magazine together, and the closing-date at the printer's may be a movable feast; but when the thing is done, it is a community affair. Even the reader feels that he has had a hand in it.

Frank Crowninshield of "Vanity Fair" has an editorial conference with sixty-one associate editors every morning, and in the afternoon the rest of the scribes, artists, and *exaltés* in the world, who happen to be in New York, drop in and run over the next number with him.

Take any morning of any week and analyze the occupants of "Vanity Fair's" reception room, all waiting amid the red, aphrodisiac tapestries to see Mr. Crowninshield "personally". A barefoot dancer or two over in the corner, rehearsing the steps for their

new outdoor dance "The Birth of the Conch-Shell"; a Macedonian sculptor, bearing a sample of his work in the shape of intertwined ostrich eggs entitled, "Mlle. R. L——"; the current amateur golf champion with a new stance, the details of which he wants to impart exclusively to Mr. Crowninshield; three or four stars from Broadway w a i t i n g to be photographed in "Vanity Fair's" studio, over which Baron de Meyer presides so loftily, and in which the lighting arrangements are cleverly concealed in the patient's corsage; a representative from the Musical Comedy Lyric-Writers Association to sign Mr. Crowninshield up as toastmaster for their annual dinner. (If Mr. Crowninshield had been married and had had children, his wife and children would have seen him at dinner just two nights last winter during the toastmastering season. One of these occasions was when the Osteopathic Society banquet, at which he was to have presided, was postponed because of the epidemic, and the other occasion was that of the Authors' League dinner, which didn't begin until 11:30.)

Then there would perhaps be a delegation from the Colony Club to enlist his services in a bazaar for Wayward Babies; a man with a new auction-bridge puzzle; seven artists with a total of seventy ideas which could be worked up into a series of sketches, all of which will be discarded when the editor makes a better suggestion of his own; an aviator with a new electrically-heated waistcoat for high altitudes; an automobilist who has just discovered a way to get to Palm Beach, over the road, without going through Georgia; and eight personal friends who have dropped in to borrow money and say "hello".

As a matter of fact, they are *all* personal friends. In any quarter of the globe, you are likely to run into a personal friend of Frank Crowninshield's. They are like Eastman kodaks or McCormick reapers. Paris, Singapore, Budapest, or Pinsk,—it makes no difference where. And each one has always just sold him something and is working on something else for the December number. The German Secret Service in its most energetic days was a local organization compared with the world-wide activity and ubiquity of the Frank Crowninshield Benevolent Association.

This is, in part, due to the cosmopolitan affiliations of the man himself. He was born in Paris, and, as an infant, was so impressed with its possibilities as a home town, that he returned after an adolescence spent in other lands, to devote four more years there to a search for truth. He lived in Rome for upward of five years and attended college there. A quasi-literary career in London completed his education, at least in the foreign field-work of his course in editorship.

For he has ideas which are distinctly his own on the subject of the education of an editor. The old school of editorial training included courses in Greek history, Chaucer, Latin prose, proof-reading; and, as a special concession to the trend of modern thought, a summer course of six weeks in the writing of editorial blurbs to be run in boxes, by means of which the reader is warned how superlatively good the story in question is going to be and how frightfully much better the one in next month's issue promises. With these things in mind, almost anyone could edit a magazine of the Neo-Godey Period.

But, according to Crowninshield,

the modern editor should cast aside all this educational tradition and devote himself to more serious studies. He would have classes held at irregular hours in such places as the Metropolitan Opera House, or the Ritz roof, or in a bosky dell where there is plenty of lunging space for partially-draped barefoot dancers, and in seats E-1 and E-3 of any New York theatre, with perhaps special training at holding the monkey at a photographer's while Mrs. Castle has her matutinal picture taken.

For relaxation, following these courses, the prospective editor should retire when it is light and get up when he is rested. A game of golf will add that healthy glow of which the advertisements speak,—and there you have your editor.

Golf, by the way, is one of Frank Crowninshield's weaknesses. He claims to be the most original golfer in the metropolitan circuit. The same freedom from convention and restraint which has marked his editorial products is a noticeable feature of his golf game, and the reaction of a golf ball to his singular personality is considered nothing short of remarkable. He can, without the aid of an assistant, cause a golf ball to wound birds on the wing, sail through open windows, disappear absolutely on level stretches of green, fly backward, and break into four equal parts. He and Condé Nast, the publisher of "Vanity Fair" (who has the same ideas as Crowninshield on such matters as art, make-up, and good taste) have been known to evolve a whole series of cover designs while waiting for a wayward ball to come to heel. Editing, in this manner, gives his game a certain abandon which can come only from the care-free, roving mind.

This abandon, however, stops distinctly short of his attitude toward the organized humor movement. As a boy he conceived a bitter dislike for the joke in which a fat man is shown sitting down on a bench marked "Fresh Paint". Whenever he sees it, or any other of its little brothers or sisters in the mail, a cold gleam comes into his eyes and he reaches for the pile of exquisitely polite rejection slips by means of which the editor of "Vanity Fair" goes on record as being practically desolated at having to return that particular contribution. Humor which needs gesticulation and powerful wrinklings of the visage for its best effect leaves him mirthless, and its success elsewhere has only caused him to make a great vow that no one shall make faces in any of the arts, and live in the same magazine with him.

At the risk of being exiled to Lake Mahopac when the great proletarian revolution breaks, he still maintains a certain touching faith in the—so to speak—aristocracy of America. If a rich man has good taste, he is just as worthy, in the eyes of Frank Crowninshield, as a man who has no money at all. He is like that in everything, —broad-minded.

As for the artistic future of America (and America's future bids fair to be artistic, if nothing else) he believes that the hope of a revival of Good Taste lies in those men and women who are college graduates, have some money, who know porcelains, and Verlaine, and Italian art, who love Grolier bindings, Spanish brocades, and French literature, and who do not consider it high-brow to be able to understand other languages than American—and baseball. All this sounds frightfully reactionary, it must be admitted; but you can't

expect a man to see things in their true light all at once, especially when he is so busy editing one kind of magazine that he doesn't have time to read those others which would tell him, in dollars and cents, just what life really means.

He makes up in some degree for this adherence to the old form by his willingness for any writer who writes entertainingly, to say practically anything he wants to say in "Vanity Fair",—so long as he says it in evening clothes. If Mr. Lenine could, by any chance, do a clever little skit on the success of the Soviet Idea, which could be illustrated with Fish drawings and contain sophisticated references to Piping Rock, débutante dinners, and Greenwich Village, he could undoubtedly get it printed in "Vanity Fair". The editor might not agree with him, and his little article might be sandwiched in between one on "How to be Idle though Rich" and a survey of the polo season, but it would be there; and until the Soviet Publicity Bureau has tried "Vanity Fair" with a really sparkling bit of bizarre propaganda, they have no right to maintain that there is a conspiracy on the part of the American press to hold them down.

Frank Crowninshield's failure to appreciate the artistic value of the modern school of cover design, involving native girls with ultramarine eyes and red lips,—slightly parted, disclosing three distinct and sparkling teeth,—is probably due to his early training in matters artistic, which was derived from his father, Frederic Crowninshield, who was an artist and poet of high rank. It was his father's influence in these matters which gave the editor of "Vanity Fair" a true and abiding reverence for good painting and good literature. If, now and again, he gives space to a weird fantasy done in charcoal, or with an orange-stick, or prints a verse which reads backward as well as forward, it is not because he is under the delusion that they constitute an addition to the art treasures of the world, but because they are new, and interesting, and significant. And from the new and interesting and significant things of the world today he believes that his magazine should draw its material.

His personal contribution to the literature of the age has not been slight. Aside from many smaller achievements in the field of social satire, written under a *nom de plume* in his own and other magazines, he is the author, modestly disguised, of a tome on bridge-whist which has had a sale in the bridge-whist world corresponding to that of "Dere Mable" in the world of belles lettres. It is an open secret that he is the man who introduced pirate-bridge to a waiting world; and, as if this were not enough, he may safely claim the distinction of being the originator of a new school of advertising copy-writing which has proved enormously successful.

This style of public appeal may be classed as the Elevated Eyebrow method. Its force lies in being able to put the reader at a disadvantage and in making him feel that the best years of his life have been wasted. Whether he be at the top of his profession in Wall Street or the country's leading authority on sulphite pulp, he is made to realize that he really amounts to very little in the world unless he buys the latest issue of "Vanity Fair" and learns about the Big, Vital Things of Life.

An appreciation of Crowninshield

must, of necessity, read suspiciously like a house advertisement for "Vanity Fair", because you can't describe one without describing the other.

And it is much simpler to describe a magazine than a man, especially when the man happens to be your boss.

AN HISTORIC AMERICAN HUMORIST

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

SECRETARY Stanton once told of the sudden and peremptory call to the White House on September 22, 1862, and of there finding the entire War Cabinet assembled. It was one of the darkest hours of the strife, but the President at first took no notice of the gathering, being absorbed in a little book. Finally he said: "Gentlemen, did you ever read anything from Artemus Ward? Let me read you a chapter that is very funny". Not a member of the Cabinet smiled and Stanton was particularly exasperated by what seemed like buffoonery. Nevertheless, the President read the chapter with great deliberation, and, having finished, laughed heartily. No one joined in the laughter. "Well", said the President, "let's have another chapter"; and he read another, to the gathering's increasing astonishment. Stanton was considering whether he should rise and leave the meeting abruptly, when Lincoln threw the book down, heaved a sigh, and said: "Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? With the fearful strain that is upon me night and day, if I did not laugh I should die, and you need this medicine as much as I do."

He then put his hand in his tall hat that stood upon the table, and pulled out a little paper. Turning to the members of the Cabinet, he said: "Gentlemen, I have called you here on very important business. I have prepared a little paper of much significance. I have made up my mind that this paper is to issue; that the time has come when it should issue; that the people are ready for it to issue. It is due to my Cabinet that you should be the first to hear and know of it, and if any of you have any suggestions to make as to the form of this paper or its composition, I shall be glad to hear them; but the paper is to issue." He then read the Emancipation Proclamation. Describing his emotions Stanton said: "I have always tried to be calm, but I think I lost my calmness for a moment, and with great enthusiasm I arose, approached the President, extended my hand, and said: 'Mr. President, if reading chapters of Artemus Ward is a prelude to such a deed as this, the books should be filed among the archives of the nation, and the author should be canonized. Henceforth I see the light, and the country is saved!'; and all said: 'Amen!' Lincoln said to me in a droll way as I was leaving, 'Stanton, it would have been too early last spring.' As I look back upon it I think the President was right."

The particular bit of Artemus Ward thus associated with one of the greatest events in history was "A High-handed Outrage at Utica". There was

no particular significance in the selection. It might have been any of a dozen of Artemus Ward's contributions of the period. For to Ward's jokes the President was forever turning from the torturing strain of public affairs. Lincoln was above all a western American. In the showman's stories he saw the real humor of the people he knew so well, and in the presence of defeat and disaster he chuckled at their whimsicalities, to the comfort of his soul. Stanton, on the other hand, lacked a sense of humor. Artemus Ward had scored that characteristic in an account of an imaginary interview with the President. The parting adjuration of the humorist is a fair sample of what moved Americans of the 'sixties to uproarious laughter: "Tell E. Stanton that his boldness, honesty, and vigger merits all praise, but to keep his undergarments on. E. Stanton has apparently only one weakness, which it is, he can't allers keep his undergarments from flying up over his head".

It is not for us to sit in judgment as to the quality of Artemus Ward's humor. To the present generation it is a humor of yesterday. The popular taste in humor is ever changing. Mr. Dooley is not so funny today as he was twenty years ago, and some of Artemus Ward's best witticisms read as archaic as Tom Hood's dreadfully punning:

> Ben Butts he was a soldier bold,
> And used to war's alarms.
> A cannon ball took off his legs,
> So he laid down his arms.

To appraise justly these men it must be remembered that they won the spontaneous and whole-hearted response of their contemporaries. At Artemus Ward's whimsicalities Cleveland laughed, and then New York laughed, and California, Nevada, and Utah laughed, and the whole country laughed. Then the showman took himself and his wares to England, and London puzzled its head, considered the matter, and then laughed more loudly than all the rest.

The makings of the humorist were in the boy Charles Farrar Browne in his native Waterford, Maine, where he was born April 26, 1834. When seventeen he was working as a printer in the office of the Skowhegan "Clarion". In his spare time he slapped the town affectionately. For example, there was a skit about a group at an Oregon bar, boasting of the states of their nativity. "I", said one, "was born in Mississippi, where the sun ever shines and the magnolias bloom all the happy year round." "And I", said another, "was born in Kentucky, the home of impassioned oratory; the home of Clay; the state of splendid women, of gallant men." "And I", said a third, "was born in Virginia, the home of Washington; the birthplace of statesmen; the state of chivalrous deeds and noble hospitality." "And I", said a yellow-haired and sallow-faced man, who was not of the party at all, and who had been quietly smoking a short black pipe by the fire during their magnificent conversation, "and I was born in the garden spot of America." "Where is that?" they said. "Skowhegan, Maine", he replied. "Kin I sell you a razor-strop?"

Then, one of the adventurous race of printers of the middle 'fifties, young Browne drifted to Cleveland and the "Plain Dealer", where he first found fame. On January 30, 1858, three months after his arrival from Toledo where he had been paragraphing, the first communication signed "Artemus Ward", a pseudonym adopted by pure

chance, appeared. It purported to be from the proprietor of a side-show contemplating an exhibition in Cleveland, and was a riot of eccentric English and still more eccentric spelling. Its publication placed the "Plain Dealer" permanently on the journalistic map of the world. Every few days thereafter followed a new letter dated from a freshly discovered town which the mythical writer discussed in a spirit of banter.

To New York Artemus Ward migrated about the beginning of 1861, to join the staff of "Vanity Fair", and to become one of that circle of literary Bohemians that gathered in Pfaff's beer cellar on Broadway near Bleecker Street. "We were all very merry at Pfaff's", wrote Thomas Bailey Aldrich in his poem, "At the Café", printed in the first number of "Vanity Fair". Among the habitués whose names are still remembered were William Winter, Fitz James O'Brien, author of "The Diamond Lens", George Arnold, wit and poet, and Walt Whitman, with five years of "Leaves of Grass" behind him, posing much in flannel shirt and sombrero, roughly unpleasant, and plainly on exhibition. Also this rough Bohemia had its queen, the "Ada Clare" of occasional verses in the "Saturday Press" and other publications. Here Artemus Ward first broached his dream of a lecture tour and found encouragement. The first lecture, after the weighing of many titles, finally became "Babes in the Wood". As a matter of fact the title was of no consequence, for the performance consisted of the retailing of numerous jokes quite unrelated to the subject announced. For example, the lecture, "Sixty Minutes in Africa", had nothing to do with Africa except that Ward would end his hour's foolery in this manner:

> Africa is my subject. You wish me to tell you something about Africa. Africa is on the map. It's on all the maps of Africa I have ever seen. You may buy a good map of Africa for a dollar. If you will study it well you will know more about Africa than I do. It's a comprehensive subject too vast, I assure you, for me to enter upon tonight. You would not wish me to—I feel that, I feel it deeply and I am very sensitive. If you go home and go to bed, it will be better for you than to go with me to Africa.

When, in 1866, Artemus Ward transplanted himself to London for what was to be the last year of his life, it was to find there a personal atmosphere much akin to that of the genial Broadway beer cellar. The Pfaff's of England was the Savage Club, then a very loosely constructed Bohemian organization, to which his coming gave great vogue, and of which he became the reigning attraction. He reached England on June 13. With "Artemus Ward" as the qualification, he was elected to membership on August 4. The nature of the fame that had preceded him is indicated by the fact that "Punch", which had been anti-American during the war, not only hastened to secure him as a contributor, but also departed from its dearest traditions, blazing his name in the columns of the paper and in huge letters over the door of the publication office. As a lecturer in England he was an instant success. He became the idol of London. "Artemus the delicious", Charles Reade called him. But with the fulness of the cup came the brevity of the draught. The chill and fog of the London winter smote him down. He went to Jersey, and after a short stay there, returned to Southampton. In Southampton he died on Ash Wednesday, March 6, 1867, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year.

Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne). A Biography and Bibliography. By Don C. Seitz. Harper and Bros.

THE LONDONER

LONDON, *December* 1, 1919.

THE other day I was invited, by the editor of a weekly newspaper, to express an opinion as to the influence of women upon current literature. It seems that in his new book M. Julien Benda, the author of a famous novel "L'Ordination", states that the depraved taste of women is rotting literature altogether. Women, he suggests, have no use for the intellectual. They must have the merely emotional. The editor who wrote to me quoted these views and asked how far knowledge or thought of women as the final judges of contemporary literature affects the actions of contemporary men of letters.

Now there seems no doubt that the majority of women detest the intellectual novel, for instance. The intellectual novel will never have the circulation of the sentimental and sensuous tale; but the reason is clear. The amount of emotion which most people can get into their lives by natural means is very small. It is not at all equal to the demand. The human appetite for sentiment is absolutely insatiable. But it is not a purely feminine appetite, because men are great readers of sentimental novels. The only reason for supposing that the bad taste of women is adversely affecting modern literature is that the majority of novel-readers are women. Nobody questions the suggestion that modern literature is degenerate. It has been a commonplace of every age that all previous ages have been superior to it. The average has always been bad; and as novels are nowadays the most plentiful fruit of conventional intellect, and as they are the most widely consumed fruit, it is obvious that they do to a very large extent represent current taste as no other form of reading-matter (apart from the newspapers) can do.

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The case seems, therefore, pretty clear. Wherever they have any group influence at all, women tend to lower standards of art—not because intelligent women are less so than intelligent men, but because in general they concern themselves more copiously than men do with the forms of art which they patronize. As the general level of intelligence is low, and as only brains can supply the inner resource which obviates the need for outside stimulants, the inferior nature, longing for emotion and emotional stimulant, plunges for what is most strongly and crudely flavored. That is why, in general, the bad novel has the greatest circulation. It gives the majority, untrained and uncritical, the kind of stimulant required to make good a natural deficiency. The rich nature, generating its own emotion, can attend to other matters, and so develops critical taste. The poor one, dependent upon outside nourishment, has no standards, and gobbles up that which is most savory or most saccharine.

Why M. Benda should lay all the blame upon women I do not realize—except that women, as I have said, are the principal patrons of the novel.

But when it comes to the question of the—as it were—prenatal influence of feminine taste in literature, we are up against another problem. You will remember that when a Commission was held in England to inquire into the Dramatic Censorship, several prominent writers, including Thomas Hardy, said that they were discouraged from writing plays because they wanted to write sincerely of real life, and because they knew how impossible it was to get a sincere play about real life past the censor.

At the time I thought this deterrent rather morbidly exaggerated; and in the case of the novel I should be inclined equally to question it. Individuals may be affected. There may be compromises. But the mere existence of intellectual novels, the fact that all the principal literary reputations (things quite distinct from sales) are intellectual, suggests decidedly that the effect of popular judgment upon the mind of a writer is not as great as M. Benda implies. In fact I fancy the whole of the excitement is due to a misapprehension. It is not the case that those capable of good work in the novel as a rule produce bad work in order to secure sales. The bad novel is inimitable. It is produced with as much sincerity—or at any rate, belief in its essential "rightness"—as the good novel, and nobody is going to get past the fact that while a novelist may modify a situation or may make a happy ending where none is probable, he cannot deliberately succeed with a bad novel after failing with good ones. It is not done.

* * * *

Nor is the case of M. Benda better, it seems to me, when it is applied to publishers. Most publishers of any standing will always publish a good book if they get the chance of it. The really good book generally finds its select public; and even if the publisher makes no money out of it, he will not mind so long as the book's quality is recognized. It is not that the publisher is an altruist, but that he appreciates the value to himself of a good book.

In England—I do not know how it is in America—there is certainly a great trade in authors whose reputations are greater than their sales. It is worth while for a publisher to issue a good book because the good book is the book that draws attention to the publisher. The bad book may earn money; but few people look at the foot of its title-page to note its port of origin. On the other hand, if a book is good, it is read by all those who notice details of the sort. This has been proved over and over again. They may order such matters differently in France, of course; and I gather that French authors do not make fortunes out of moderate sales, as some English authors do; but, at least so far as our own market is concerned, I will swear in face of any opposition that the good book is not a drug in the market, and that however true M. Benda's philosophical thesis may be, his sensational approach to it gives the whole thing a false excitement.

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An aspect of popular taste which seems to me to be very interesting is that the scandalous memoir has died down, and the personal memoir has very much arisen in the past year or two. Books about living men, volumes of personal sketches, personal sketches in magazines and reviews, personal paragraphs in every newspaper—one finds them all in profusion, and they are very widely read and

appreciated. We all, it appears, want to know real things (or at least only slightly incredible things) about the people we see, or about those whose books we read, or whose pictures we admire, or whose doings in some field or other of human prowess are such as to provoke interest.

The use of little photographs in newspapers, illustrating some gossipy paragraph, is comparatively recent. More recent still is the vogue of the character-sketch, often caustic, such as we have lately had in the series of articles by "E. T. Raymond", subsequently collected into a book under the name "Uncensored Celebrities". A new collection by the same author is on the point of appearing, and to this volume, which includes a sketch of the Prince of Wales, has been given the title "All and Sundry". "Uncensored Celebrities" had a most notable sale. Its successor will perhaps do almost as well, because while the earlier book had great topical political interest, "All and Sundry" casts a wider net and deals with a number of prominent persons chosen from every kind of life. It should thus appeal to numbers of those whose interest in politics is exiguous, and to whom, for its almost strictly political contents, "Uncensored Celebrities" may have been less absorbing than something about actresses or sportsmen or authors.

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I mentioned in a previous causerie the forthcoming publication of some new literary journals of a "high-brow" order; but the high-brows are not having the journalistic field to themselves. We are being flooded with new monthly and weekly magazines and story-papers. I wonder what will be their fate. Prominent among them is a very close copy of "The Saturday Evening Post" issued under the title of "Nash's Weekly". This paper is announced as having no connection whatever with "Nash's Magazine", which is a Hearst publication. But the "Nash" of the title is the originator of "Nash's Magazine", all the same. His name is Eveleigh Nash, and when he was in business before the war he gained great fame and profit by publishing the notorious "Memoirs" of Lady Cardigan. He also founded "Nash's Magazine", and a not very impressive weekly critical journal which had a short life. During the war various causes produced Nash's temporary retirement from the publishing trade; but he is now striking afresh, and I suppose may be expected to reestablish himself as a publisher of books and journals.

There ought to be an opening here for something as good as "The Saturday Evening Post"; but I very much doubt whether English writers can produce short stories of the same effective kind as those which make the "Post" so admirable. The English short story in general is an extremely lamentable affair. It has neither style nor scheme. It is merely a product, and sometimes a by-product. But magazines must exist, and they must have short stories, and the more magazines there are, the more stories there must be to fill them; so that if opportunity is so lavishly offered for this particular example of their wares, English writers may once again cultivate seriously the art of the short story and make the magazines worth reading. That would be a splendid thing.

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One magazine which has started here with a great flourish is "Hutchinson's Magazine", the creation of an extraordinarily active young pub-

lisher. It is all fiction; and its principal concern seems to be to get a nice mingling of fairly distinguished "literary" names with those of the tremendously popular writers, such as Ethel M. Dell. It seems odd to see the name of Max Beerbohm on the cover of a popular magazine; but there it is, as large as that of Cosmo Hamilton; and young Mr. Hutchinson is showing plenty of enterprise in securing an absolutely astounding contrasted variety in authors. He is one of the most remarkable young men in London—a financier and a worker, of a type to which the publishing trade has hitherto offered few inducements. Already he is said to control seven businesses; his daily occupation is to buy up an old journal, start a new one, and to contract upon an immense scale for novels by the score and the hundred. He rushes about London in a little red two-seater car, punctual to the minute for each appointment, which he carefully times, and transacts business until all the hours. He is one of the busiest men I ever heard of. The creation of a magazine, or the making of a contract running into thousands of pounds, is nothing to him. It is all taken in his stride.

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The consequence is, that Hutchinson's is becoming one of the largest wholesale novel-publishing houses in England and the British colonies. It has an extraordinarily long and varied list of fiction, and—with one or two other houses—threatens something of a revolution in the fiction market. Whereas, until recently, practically every form of publisher has had in his list a fair sprinkling of novels, these particular works are tending more and more to fall into the hands of three firms—Hutchinson, Hodder and Stoughton, and Collins. One of these houses sees a man or woman doing good or salable work and, instead of nibbling timidly with a single book, makes—if possible—a single contract with the author assuring him (or her) of a good advance payment on account of royalty for three books or more. The question of old books is discussed. Sometimes they are taken over. The thing is done on the grand scale. It is most impressive. And it pays. It pays everybody, including the author.

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Now one slight disadvantage occurs to me as accompanying this very welcome interest in the welfare of our novelists. By concentrating novels into the hands of two or three publishers, you tend to make them mere marketable commodities. You will almost certainly for a time encourage overproduction. And finally y o u menace the author with the fear of a possible future trust which could dictate terms with impunity. By driving other publishers out of the novel market, you tend to discourage young talent, because hitherto it has been the small publisher who has experimented with novels by young authors; and if certain houses gain predominance in any one field, they will be able to flood the market with novels by authors of repute and popularity. Already the small publisher finds it hard, or impossible, to make a profit out of a "first novel". If, when he finds an author who pays, that author is promptly annexed by one of the princely houses which (by reason of their wonderful machinery for selling books) can afford to pay more than the small man struggling for his income, the game will no longer be worth the candle. It will then, perhaps, be a fight between the literary

agent and the big novel publishers; but the novel will by that time quite definitely and irredeemably have been commercialized.

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In spite of all these threatened difficulties, new publishing houses are springing up here upon every hand. For one thing, many young men with money are coming out of the army and wanting a profession which they think requires no training. Their education, may be, was interrupted by the war; they have no special knowledge; they are "fond of books". Therefore they have been trying hard —many of them—to buy partnerships in established firms; and if that plan fails they are in a few cases starting upon their own account, with everything to learn, without books to publish, without knowledge of manufacturing or selling or advertising. It is a pathetic spectacle. Meanwhile, new firms are arising out of different circumstances. There are several men beginning afresh who, before the war, had actual experience in publishing. I know of at least three such men who have started or are starting this year to publish. One of them is said to have begun when he had arranged only one book! But I have since seen a list of works to be produced from his establishment which suggests that his last six months have been most strenuous. The list has not much "weight" or distinction; but it has several books that may come off when they are ready.

Of these young houses the most interesting is probably that of Richard Cobden-Sanderson, whose list is not yet issued. Cobden-Sanderson is of course the son of the distinguished artist-printer, one of the great supporters of the Morris tradition. He has had years of practical experience of the trade in the firm of his uncle, T. Fisher Unwin. Moreover, he has a very wide personal acquaintance among the "intellectuals" of the day; and if there is anything at all in this fact, it should mean that whatever list he ultimately has will be quite distinguished. But of course personal acquaintance with workers does not necessarily mean that work can be obtained from them for publication, because these people have in many cases made contracts well in advance of the day. I should say, however, that of the young publishers just starting Cobden-Sanderson, although he cannot "command success", will do more, and "deserve it". I hope so. His father's name should certainly help him. It is not without historical significance that Cobden-Sanderson's wife will be associated with him in the business. From personal acquaintance I am sure that her influence will not be such as to justify the remarks about women which I have quoted from M. Benda. On the contrary.

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So far as new books go, I have heard nothing whatever to suggest that my remarks the other month on the prospects of the season were prejudiced. Books are streaming out, and are selling, on the whole, very well; but I do not think the season is going to take a very notable place in history. The various German and military memoirs will attract some notice, as I have already said, and there are one or two novels of note. Otherwise I should say books were selling as a matter of course rather than as a result of any intrinsic value. I notice in Methuen's list a novel, "If All These Young Men", by Romer Wilson, author of "Martin Schuler", the novel that made a stir here last autumn. I do not know what

this second book will be like, and I am sure its publication, and the subsequent scrutiny, will be an ordeal for the young author. Second books are the most difficult of all to write. I hear of one novelist, whose first novel was acclaimed, who has destroyed the greater part of its successor. This, I believe, is a not uncommon happening. The first book often contains all the young author knows, and the second book, written because the first has been published, has, comparatively, a noticeable absence of joy in its composition. I must make it quite clear that this remark is not intended to apply to Miss Wilson, about whose novel I know nothing beyond the fact that it relates to a short period in the war. After a first novel so striking one expects something unusually penetrating, and looks forward to it, more than to most of the other novels that are coming, because it may provide a fresh thrill. It is strange to think that there should be so few books in a great autumn season for which one is eagerly waiting. But I think, on the whole, that 1919—whatever it may still bring in the way of potential immortals—will ultimately be known solely as the year of "The Young Visiters", since that little book has washed out most of the others.

* * * *

Speaking of "The Young Visiters" reminds me that Daisy Ashford has been offered an American reading tour. If she goes, I suppose she will have a *furore*. The book, I hear, has been dramatized, and the play is to be produced. What a slice of luck for the English publishers if it succeeds! For large as is the public for a book, the theatregoing public is much larger; and with the play a success, the novel itself would enter upon a new lease of prosperity as a souvenir!

SIMON PURE

INVIOLATE

BY RUTH LAMBERT JONES

TWO things are mine beyond the power
Of time's relentless robbery—
Remembrance of a shining hour,
The hope of shining hours to be.

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CURRENTS IN FRENCH LITERATURE

BY MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES

THE first year of peace has not produced in France either a great war book or a great peace book. As was natural there has been a slackening in the production of those wonderful human documents, — diaries, journals, memoirs, and books with the truth disguised under a thin veil of fiction (as "Une Femme Dans le Zone"),—which made some of us feel as if the war instead of having injured, had only enriched and benefited the splendid treasury of French literature!

And here a word of high praise and commendation may be said of the rôle played by the French publishers during the fifty months the war lasted. They were faced with incredible difficulties. During the first week of August, 1914, every able-bodied young man and youth in their employment disappeared to join his regiment. As time went on every able-bodied older man was pressed into some form of national service; and yet, immediately after the Battle of the Marne, the noble stream of war books began to gush out from both great and small publishing houses. More, every Paris publisher put what the French call "a certain coquetry" into the actual production of his books, and for a long time the prices were not put up to the public, though the prices to the publishers themselves had of course enormously increased! Yet another point. There came an immediate cessation—almost as if the magic wand had been waved—of the production of those books which the cynical foreigner has always regarded as being peculiarly "French" — those books which at their best certainly add to the gaiety of nations, but which at their worst, are a disgrace not so much to the French who produce them, as to the human nature which creates the demand of which they form the supply. While the war lasted French literature became absolutely pure—in this forming a curious contrast to English literature; for with the war came to London, at any rate, the end of the absurd "Library Censorship", and this meant the sudden publication of more than one now famous "adult" novel of which Arnold Bennett's "The Pretty Lady" was the most daring example.

II

How far has the war enriched the French language? Not at all, would reply the old-fashioned, serious lover of French as she was spoken and written by Madame de Sévigné, Chateaubriand, and Renan—to take three widely different and yet great French stylists. But those who are not purists will tell you that the poilu has deserved well of the future French reader and writer; and in that connection let me once more commend the admirable work entitled, "Le Poilu tel qu'il se Parle. Dictionnaire des Termes Populaires employés aux Armées en 1914-1918". I venture to predict that this book, if not reprinted, will become very valu-

able; and if reprinted, will take its place among literary classics.

There was always in France a special army slang which was familiar to all French people,—for it should never be forgotten that the army is France and that France is the army,—but it was quite unknown among even the most learned American and British Franco-philes. There, for some mysterious reason, the bayonet was always known as *Rosalie* and, from the day it was invented, the '75 was always referred to by the artillery as *Charlotte!* The word *boche*, the most famous new word of all, was as a matter of fact used by Verlaine in his curious book, "Kant, Schopenhauer, Hegel et Autres Boches"; and more recently it appeared in that very Gallic series of tales known under the generic title of "Claudine". Still, on the whole, the word *boche* only passed into permanent parlance after the outbreak of war. A funny touch which was contributed by the poilu alone, and which has not passed into current French slang, was the fact that a certain type of German war trick was habitually referred to as *une bochonnerie*. Many words used in the trenches will naturally die out with the generation which used them —such words—terribly macabre some of them—as had to do with the various forms of fire, the effect of shells, machine guns, etc., on the human body. These range from *machine à dépeupler* and *grêle à mort* to *geulard* and *fusil fou*. But many of the new words will certainly take their place in due course in the Dictionnaire de l'Académie. Curiously enough, a French war word which has passed into use in England is hardly ever used in France, or rather it is not used more than it always was before the war. That word is *camouflage*.

III

Perhaps a Frenchwoman may be pardoned for pointing out with pride that by far the best book which has yet appeared on the American army in France is the work of two French soldiers. The volume consists of over four hundred pages and is called "L'Armée Américaine dans le Conflit Européen", and one of the two authors, Lieutenant-Colonel de Chambrun, had the privilege of forming part of the Viviani Mission to the United States. It is a volume which will thrill the heart of every American reader, for it shows how splendid was the promise and how magnificent the fulfilment. A valuable section of the book is that which contains the French Orders of Battle up to December 1, 1918, including the names of all the generals, senior staff officers, and regimental commanders in question.

IV

A book to which I have already alluded, but in a very cursory way, is full of new matter concerning the "Romantics". This is a volume entitled "Buloz et ses Amis". Buloz, as some may remember, was the brilliant and formidable founder and editor of the "Revue des deux Mondes". Like every great editor he was the friend and monitor of his leading contributors, and never had an editor in any country such a wonderful group of writers as fell to the lot of François Buloz. Dumas père, Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Musset, Montalembert, and last but not least, Georges Sand, were all on the closest terms of intimacy with him.

The first number of the "Revue" with the orange covers appeared in February of 1831, when the founder was only twenty-six years old. For

many, many years the circulation could only be described as tiny; yet every one of its contributors became in due course immortal, and that in the really great sense of the word. Buloz was a generous editor, constantly praising and patting on the back even a cantankerous and queer-natured writer. It is strange and pathetic to read the story of how all these wonderful people loved — and sometimes hated—one another. For instance, when Sainte-Beuve published a tremendous eulogy of Hugo in an early number, Alfred de Vigny was so indignant, and thought the praise so excessive, that he actually compelled Buloz to put into the "Revue's" next number a curious kind of apology, pointing out that Hugo was not so wonderful after all! Sainte-Beuve was naturally furious, and gave up writing for Buloz after a short time.

We are also told for the first time the inside history of Balzac's break with the "Revue". I fear that there is no doubt that the author of "Père Goriot" (at that time this was the most celebrated of his stories) was "inexact, undependable, never up to time, asking for proofs to be sent him in a great hurry and then keeping them for a month, and worst of all, obtaining advances on novels which he declared to have already completed, and of which he had only written the title!" The end of the relations of Balzac with the "Revue des Deux Mondes" was a law case which was fought out with great bitterness, and at considerable expense, in 1836.

To the great majority of foreign lovers of French literature the name of Buloz is known only through his connection with the tangled love affair of Georges Sand and Alfred de Musset. The two famous lovers actually met for the first time at a dinner given by him in 1833, and the good-natured editor—who had now become *Buloz le magnifique* in the lady's grateful eyes — provided the lovers with four thousand francs in order that they might go off for an illicit honeymoon to Venice! Many of us are familiar with poor Georges Sand's agonized letters written from there to Buloz, notably that one dated February 4, 1834, in which she tells him that Musset is dying, and that all the money they have left in the world is sixty francs! She implores him to send her a further advance, although she had not been able to keep her promise with regard to the chapters on which he was counting. Incidentally, Buloz, in addition to financing the industrious "Georges", had to pay one of Musset's debts of honor. Buloz was the confidant of both Madame Sand and of Musset with regard to the painful — one might almost say the grotesque—Pagello interlude. He it was who brought them together again, but he was much too shrewd to hope for a permanent reconciliation; and it was to him that Georges Sand turned for sympathy when she finally broke with Musset. Curiously enough it was she who, in the end, gave up writing for the "Revue", while Musset was faithful to Buloz to the very end of his strange and stormy life.

V

Not only in France but wherever there are men and women interested in the ways, and byways, of human nature, will the love affairs of those who are known as the French Romantics continue to excite interest and curiosity. It would seem as if the very last word had been said concerning the love affairs of Victor Hugo and of his immediate circle, but now

comes a new book full of hitherto unpublished documents. The volume, "Amours d'un Poète", deals with a great deal more than with the love affairs of those whom his own young contemporaries called "The Great Man", half seriously and half with an affectionate derision. While there is a good deal in the volume with which those interested in Hugo and in his enigmatic Adèle, are already familiar, we are given some new facts concerning Adèle, Hugo and Sainte-Beuve. Here is disproved once for all the allegation that Madame Victor Hugo only listened to her husband's friend when that same husband had been unfaithful to her. Unfortunately for poor Adèle, it is now known beyond question that the two met secretly a full year before Victor Hugo had met the woman Juliette Drouet, who was to be his lifelong love. The new documents come from a curious source. Mademoiselle Drouet had a sister named Kock, and it was that lady's son, Louis Kock, who, at his aunt's death in 1883, inherited all Juliette's Victor Hugo relics. A certain number of these were given by him to the town of Paris, and formed the foundation of the very quaint and interesting museum which was wisely arranged in the beautiful old house in that corner of the Place Royale where the Hugos lived for many years. Kock was the first curator of the museum, and after his death his family sold those papers, poems, and letters which he had kept in his own possession, and which he had not even allowed anyone to see. The papers included several quite new poems, which for some reason Victor Hugo did not care to publish, but which he gave to Mademoiselle Drouet. Among the letters are notes from Renan and other lesser-known Frenchmen of distinction. I fancy few people are aware that Victor Hugo left strict injunctions that none of his private letters were to be printed till 1963, so the world will have to wait forty-three to forty-four years before knowing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the man whom some of his fellow countrymen put above Napoleon, for both practical and imaginative genius.

VI

I do not think that I have yet alluded in any of my former articles to one of the most distinguished of those writers who have joined the Immortals since the opening of 1919. This is François de Curel, by birth a member of the old nobility (he has the right to title of viscount). One of his ancestors rode at Joinville's stirrup and followed him through the Crusades. This new member of the French Academy was at school with Marshal Foch, and began writing when still a youth. For a long time writing was his hobby, for he inherited certain important business interests; and he still gives up a great deal of time to what the French mysteriously call *affaires*. He was still quite young when he wrote a remarkable play which some critics still think his best work. It was called "L'envers d'une Sainte", and was turned down by both the great state theatres, but eagerly accepted by Antoine, who was then producing every kind of comedy and tragedy, either French or foreign, which seemed to him brilliant and original. However, the critics acclaimed the unknown youth as a great dramatist, and he has gone from triumph to triumph. Perhaps the most striking of his works is that which describes, with a strange and bitter cynicism, the world out of which he himself came. That play is called

"Les Fossiles", and describes how a family of the French nobility fare in the world which they at once fear, envy, and despise.

Unlike the great majority of French writers, de Curel has a sort of nervous dislike of society,—taking the word in its narrow sense,—and so foreigners never have the pleasure of making acquaintance with this curious and interesting man. Perhaps I should add that he succeeded to the *fauteuil* of Paul Hervieu; and in the eulogy which this fact compelled him to make on his predecessor, he made it clear that he did not really appreciate the extraordinary qualities of the author of those two wonderful and terrible novels, "Peints par Eux-mêmes" and "L'Armature".

I count the hour I once spent with Hervieu as among those I remember with the greatest intellectual pleasure. He was the first French writer who made it clear to me that, from the novelist's point of view, very cheap books are a mistake, for the simple reason they do not provide a living wage. I reproached him for having given up the novel for the play, pointing out that many brilliant Frenchmen could write clever stage pictures of life, but very few had proved themselves capable of writing such a book as "Painted by Themselves". This story is told entirely in letters, and it concerns what English critics disdainfully call "The Eternal Triangle". But the reader puts the book down feeling that he has known all those people, as if he had been flesh of their flesh, and soul of their soul. In the last chapter of the tragedy, for it is a tragedy, is described what I have long thought to be the most dramatic scene in the whole range of French fiction. The triumph is the greater as the hero of the scene and the book is the type of man the world agrees to regard as a thorough rascal.

VII

Even now people interested in literature are beginning to ask one another which was the greatest of the war books. Some of course quote one book and some another. I have heard several pick out Brand Whitlock's "Belgium under the German Occupation"; but from the point of view of the thrill—and in the long run it is probably the thrill that most impresses the great mass of readers in every country—I doubt if any book can compare with the small volume lately issued in Brussels under the rather long and imposing title, "Histoire de 'La Libre Belgique' Clandestine". Every writer in the world, in a very special sense every journalist, will feel a sense of exaltation when reading the wonderful story of how a handful of men and women —at the time hunted, proscribed, suspected and now and again actually arrested and thrust into prison—managed to outwit the all-powerful German government by writing, printing, and—what was of course the most difficult task of all—circulating the tiny newspaper "La Libre Belgique" of which the first number appeared early in 1915 and the last number just before the armistice. The honor of its inception falls to a Belgian journalist Victor Jourdain who, at the time he took on the perilous task, was seventy-five years of age. He was disturbed, as all thinking Belgians were at the time, by the elaborate propaganda of lies which was being sent out—often by neutrals whose friendship for Germany blinded them to the truth—from Brussels and Antwerp. Jourdain made up his mind to start a new sheet which should tell

the truth and nothing but the truth, and which should be the one free thing in a country which had become hopelessly enslaved. During the first year he was helped by two friends of whom one was a Jesuit priest and the other a young writer. They wrote the whole of the first few numbers printed, their articles being written on tissue paper and then secretly conveyed to the house where they were to be printed. It is an amazing story of human resource and quiet, cold heroism. Nearly twenty printers risked in a literal sense their lives to carry on the work; for, as time went on, the German authorities grew more and more enraged to find that the paper was not only being printed but immensely circulated in secret hidden ways which they found it impossible to discover. Even of the first number 4,000 copies found their way out all over Belgium, and when "La Libre Belgique" celebrated its first birthday, there was an edition of 25,000 copies! In the difficult and perilous task of distribution, the women of Belgium played a splendid part, as did also the priests. At different moments it looked as if the paper could not go on, for again and again the Germans arrested and imprisoned all those who were connected with its production. One is glad to know that Jourdain managed at one terrible moment to escape to England. After his departure a priest who had been connected with the Louvain University took it over and edited the last sixty numbers.

VIII

One of the most cruel and untrue verdicts ever passed on the French is that which describes them as being fickle. The average Frenchman and Frenchwoman are extraordinarily tenacious both in love and in friendship, and pathetically faithful to old loves and old hates.

This is true both with regard to public and private matters. To take one outstanding instance. Most people who have reached years of discretion (of course many people never do reach those placid if somewhat dull years!) are well aware that any form of what is conventionally called "illicit love" has about it no element of permanence. Such affairs, as a cynic once observed to the writer, generally end in cabs and tears.

Everything in the old European civilization fights against the man or woman involved in an intrigue of the kind, yet in French society, especially in the days when there was no divorce law to complicate the question, substantial fidelity to an unavowed love tie was the rule rather than the exception. The outstanding literary example is that of Victor Hugo and Juliette Drouet. Their love affair lasted fifty years, and the woman in the case, though she had had a stormy youth as a pretty and popular actress, never looked to the right or left, after she had met him. As for Victor Hugo, he at any rate pretended that he didn't, and his name was never publicly associated with that of any other woman.

This is by way of preamble to the fact that French readers are still very faithful to "Madame Bovary". I remember the thrill of doubtless unreasonable, unreasoning annoyance which I felt when I heard that Arnold Bennett had described the immortal Emma as a back number. And brilliant critic as is the great English novelist, I doubt if a single lover of "Madame Bovary" would do more than cast a pitying look at a man who could be so blind!

Now comes the news that La

Huchette, the little château where lived poor Emma Bovary's lover, the elegant egoistic Rodolphe, is to be sold by one of his descendants. The real Emma, whose awkward, ugly name was Adolphine Couturier, was born just a hundred years ago, and was married to the foolish country doctor, who will live eternally as Charles Bovary, in 1840.

The couple were contemporaries and acquaintances of Flaubert, and one cannot doubt that the strange and tragic story profoundly impressed the happy, respectable family circle of the noted Rouen surgeon who was Gustave Flaubert's father. I think it is not too much to say, that had that little fribble of a woman Adolphine Couturier never lived, the whole trend of French literature might have been different. It may be objected that if Flaubert had not written this particular novel, he would have written some other novel of equal power. The best answer to that is that he never did.

Zola, De Goncourt, Daudet, to take three outstanding French realists, all acknowledged Flaubert as their master. How they admired him and how they loved him is shown anew each time that is printed any French diary and collection of literary letters written in the 'seventies and 'eighties of the last century.

"Madame Bovary" remains the first chunk of raw, human nature fashioned by a French literary brain into a human being. England had produced in Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, and Jane Austen four great realists. But France had produced none, with the outstanding exception of Balzac. Still we have but to compare Madame Marneffe and Madame Bovary to see that whereas Balzac was able to draw an extraordinary portrait of a woman, Flaubert actually created a being of flesh and blood. And now comes the question—could he have done so, had he not known with a probing, intimate knowledge the unfortunate Adolphine Couturier?

Be that as it may, as long as France endures, we may feel sure there will be pilgrimages to La Huchette, and that men and woman — especially women—will stand, their hearts full of curious conflicting emotions, in the summerhouse or as the French call it, the *pavillon*, where took place the most poignant love scene of the great novel.

The prototype of Emma Bovary is buried in the little churchyard of Ry, close to the château of La Huchette; and the writer is acquainted with a Frenchman, who, after paying a visit to that grave, turned aside from the primrose path of dalliance on which he was then engaged—so strong was the influence, after fifty years, of Flaubert's creative genius.

IX

I hear of several new French literary weeklies or *cahiers*, as it is now the fashion to call them. With Charles Peguy disappeared the famous "Cahier de la Quinzaine" which did so very much to encourage the young writers and serious thinkers of prewar France. Alas! with his death the remarkable group of his friends and disciples fell apart, the deepest pit being dug between Romain Rolland and the others. At the present moment the most notable young writers are gathered round André Gide, who is responsible for the "Nouvelle Revue Française". The poet who, personally, appeals more to the writer than any of his fellows, is Francis Jammes. He cannot be regarded as among *les jeunes*, and yet, in a sense, he has only come to his own quite recently.

It has been well said of him that he has "the habit of isolation" and possesses a modest and retiring personality.

To return to present and future literary publications, the "Nouvelle Revue Française" has a rival in the new magazine "La Minerve Française", which aims at occupying the kind of place that the "Revue Critique" occupied in what now seem the old, old days before the war.

A STALWART NAMED BALDRIDGE

BY ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

A YOUNG, little-known stalwart named Baldridge—Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge, to set it down in full for once—the American army found delivering shells to the tired French batteries along the Chemin des Dames. Baldridge then became a private in the American infantry and remained a private until his demobilization a year later, except for one hilarious afternoon when the company clerk, by a slip of the typewriter, promoted him to a private first class—or rather to a "pvt 1/cl" as the company clerks call it.

All the A. E. F. knew this private as an artist who caught for them the true accent and color of young America overseas, for each week his drawings were reproduced in the pages of their own "Stars and Stripes". But few in America knew of any such interpreter found at the wheel of that battle-scarred old motor-truck, until the autumn of 1919 brought to the book-shelves the collection of his spirited drawings which is called "I Was There". Whereupon many, as they turned its memory-freighted pages, straightway and invariably asked two questions: "What was he doing before the war?" and "Where is he now?" We who know him were obliged to answer the first question by saying vaguely: "Oh, nothing in particular. Ad sketches and tomato-can labels and things like that out Chicago way"; and the second question by the explicit reply, "In Shantung".

For by the time Baldridge's book came from the binderies, he was roaming through China. And when the strawberries come again to the Jersey beds, I doubt if he will taste any, for the chances are he will be making friends in some Arabian village on the north coast of Africa, or setting forth to meet some kindred spirit in New South Wales.

For Baldridge is a thirteenth-century friar born out of his due time—one destined by gifts and instinct to wander cheerily over the face of his neighborhood, the earth. If, in some Icelandic village or in some crowded thoroughfare of Singapore, you ever encounter a strapping American who looks like the Goddess of Liberty,—if, further, you find him drawing on a sloppily folded wad of paper and swapping jokes the while in some heathenish lingo with the delighted natives,—well, you will be pretty safe in walking up to the stranger and saying: "Hello, Baldridge, you poor nut,

what are you doing here?" And he will welcome you like a brother and show you where the best food is to be had, and ask you if you know anyone in Madagascar.

It is an art to lead such a life as his. You must have been brought up gypsy fashion, rather. Baldridge was. You must know how to travel the world around with a negligible pack. You must care little about home and comfort, and nothing at all about money or the things that go with prosperity. You must know how to forage. Baldridge's intuitions in this branch of the science of soldiering were so well known in the A. E. F. that the only two extant portraits of him—one by Wallgren and one by Rube Goldberg—each show him attacking a sandwich; while his first message from China, speaking casually of a twenty-four-course dinner he had had in Shanghai, gave rise to alarmist rumors that he never, never would come back.

Above all you must have the art of making friends among plain folks anywhere in the world. In Baldridge, that amounts to genius. I do not know how he made out among the little Celestials around Peking; but I do remember the young Arabs, who formed a loyal volunteer cordon to ward off half the population of Algeria when Baldridge was drawing there in the shadow of the Mosque at Oran. I remember how the wide-eyed little squareheads in the Coblenz street where he was billeted in December, 1918, sat around adoringly while he toiled on improvised tree-decorations for their Christmas trees. And I never shall forget—when, in the still desolate spring of 1919, he and I went back amid the ruins of his beloved Soissons—how from every barricaded cellar and around every dismal pile of rubble, Soissons's younger set swarmed forth to greet him with cries of "C'est Monsieur Baldridge", "Maman, Monsieur Baldridge est revenu", "Aha, Monsieur Baldridge, où sont vos croquis?" The morsels of mademoiselles would cry "Taquin" at him in memory of past badinage; and one solemn little boy piped up with the refrain, "Bon jour, petit paysan", because that had been his song in the old nightmare days of the Chemin des Dames.

Thus it was with quite a Pied Piper crowd that we made our way to what was left of the St. Christophe inn, familiar in times past to so many Americans of the Lafayette Escadrille and the old Field Service set. The page of St. Christophe sketches in "I Was There" brings it back vividly—the smoky, narrow, vaulted kitchen, with all the neighbors jostling in to warm themselves. There was grandpère, proud of his white Imperial and eager to talk with Baldridge—because Baldridge was fresh from Coblenz and it was to Coblenz that grandpère had been borne off as a prisoner in 1870. How the old fellow gloated over our tales of blue-clad officers surveying the Rhineland from the misty ramparts of Ehrenbreitstein! There was the young son of the house, Erasme, laughing with that peculiarly French lucidity of mind, at the irony of having to begin three years of military service in the fall of 1919. There was the mother, she of the haunted eyes, who would leave her pan of frying potatoes to come and tell Baldridge about the older son who had passed unscathed through the furnace of Verdun, only to fall mortally wounded in the last days of the war while defending the line only two miles from his own front door.

The Soissons visit was not the only

return of this wanderer. Baldridge had been in Belgium in 1914 as a correspondent attached to the German army then flooding the country and, sick with what he saw, he had hurried back to America, and gone to the border as a hard-working stable sergeant with the Illinois Cavalry. Then had come his year as a camion driver, his six months with the American army, and at last on November 11, 1918, he was back in Belgium again—in the front line this time, with the magnificent Infantry of the Powder River crowd—the men of the Ninety-first. At the hour of hours, he slipped his tether and went forward, retracing with the Yanks the selfsame path he had watched the Germans take four years before, pausing at the same houses, meeting sometimes the same people. And they recognized him.

When I can, I am going back to the Marne and as I hit up the road that leads to Fère-en-Tardenois, I shall take a second look at every lanky figure with the not altogether ludicrous notion that it may be Baldridge.

I was There. Sketches by C. LeRoy Baldridge, Private, A.E.F. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

AN EDITOR'S MORNING MAIL

THAT line of Browning's which he applied to artists,—

> We do that which some men dream of all their lives,—

might just as well be applicable to any editor who loves his job. For I, who have edited—or rather, tried to edit—three big magazines during a period covering sixteen years, can say in all sincerity that my desk, my editorial chair, means more to me than anything else in life; and the sense of happiness I have always had both in creative and humdrum editorial work has never failed me—and I pray heaven it never will. For editorial work without enthusiasm is unthinkable to me—indeed, it would be abhorrent.

To love one's daily task—that seems to me, as it seemed to Browning, the desideratum of every man, whether he be a poet or a merchant, an actor or a soap manufacturer, a singer or a shirt-maker. I can think of nothing more uncomfortable than to go to one's office, day after day, with a feeling of boredom or with a grumpy attitude toward the morning mail.

To me, the morning mail has always had in it the thrill of adventure. For who knows what it will contain? Within the folds of this or that white envelope may rest the first outpourings of an O. Henry, an Edna Ferber, a Fannie Hurst, or a Henry Sydnor Harrison. I have "discovered" several authors; and the excitement in an office when a new writer arrives, with no previous introduction, cannot be imagined. There are critics who hold that editors are the arch enemies of young and aspiring literary genius; but if these carping critics would pause to consider what a feather it is in the cap of any editor to be the first to recognize talent, they would hush their foolish cries.

Every editor who is worthy the name has the interests of his particular magazine at heart; and to bring out a new name, beneath which is a

good story, is one of the dreams he always dreams, one of the hopes he ever expects to realize. Money could buy Kipling after he had made his reputation; but I would rather get an author any day on discrimination than on a fat check. Think of "finding" Stevenson, or James Whitcomb Riley! One's fame might easily rest on so beautiful an achievement.

A story came into our office over from Pittsburgh. It was handwritten, exquisitely handwritten. I can see it to this day—loose, unruled, six by nine sheets. It was only seventeen hundred words in length. The title was "By Courier". The name on the first page was O. Henry. I was an assistant editor then, so I was the first to read the morning mail. How I hastened to my chief with the thrilling word that a new planet had swum into our ken!

We paid seventeen dollars for that now priceless yarn. A cent a word—those were our undeviating rates. The author seemed grateful enough for that little check. I know he was, for almost immediately he sent us another story, six thousand words long, with a letter saying that he was mighty anxious to come to New York and make his way. If, therefore, we liked his manuscript, we could have it for fifty dollars, provided the money reached him by a certain date not very distant. We liked the story so well that we did not subtract that ten dollars, and sent it on within twenty-four hours. Yet there are those who hold that publishers are hard-hearted. Maybe they are. But editors are not!

So began a long series of O. Henry stories in that magazine. A rival periodical had got hold of him first, it is true; but none of his manuscripts had been in print before that happy morning when I found him in the mail.

Justus Miles Forman came along at about the same time. "The Sunflower Girl" was his very first tale—full of youth and grace and promise. We didn't change a word of it—no, not a comma; and if you've ever been an editor you know how rare that experience is with a maiden effort.

Forman turned out to be a prolific fellow. He wrote so much, and we wanted his stuff so badly, that we induced him to sign two other names on a certain type of yarn—just as we published so much of Theodosia Garrison that she had to pretend now and then she was two other contributors—"McCrea Pickering" and "John Winwood". Frequently letters came in our care for both these mythical gentlemen; and great was Mrs. Garrison's delight in what one might call this clandestine mail.

Then came the Baroness von Hutten, with a curiously illegible manuscript, sent from Europe. I remember it as though it were yesterday—"Araby". I wonder if I would think it clever now, after a lapse of sixteen years? But it amazed and amused me in those days. It had a certain smartness and sophistication that were quite remarkable, a sense of construction (it was a novelette of perhaps twenty thousand words) that made one suspicious that it might not be a first attempt at writing. But so it proved; and Bettina von Hutten went on with her clever pen, and month after month we published those early outpourings. How well she vindicated our judgment of her work afterward—for her later novels were tremendously successful and much talked about!

A young man in Richmond, Virginia, was the next to send in his un-

solicited stories. They had quality, above everything else. His style was amazingly beautiful. He put words together as a mosaic-worker completes his design, and we became intensely interested in one who could give such distinction and variety to our pages. We were after the best, though we could not pay much; and looking back now it is amazing how the manuscripts poured in from all over the country. James Branch Cabell helped to make our periodical talked about, and he, too, like Forman and O. Henry, forged ahead, and has never stopped. He is still a young man.

Another man then in Richmond was John Regnault Ellyson, of whom little has been heard in recent years. He wrote quaint, quite astonishing tales, caviar for the multitude, perhaps, but valuable for that very reason. He never went stale, and I never learned much about him—he was like a certain joke-writer in the far West whom none of us ever met, who never answered personal letters, and who always sent in exactly fourteen "jokes and skits" at a time—never by any chance one more or one less. Perhaps, through long experience, he had found that fourteen was a magic number. I never solved the mystery; but that, I suspect, must have been the reason for his steadfast habit.

We found a plethora of poets; but as we used a great deal of verse, and paid upon acceptance, it is no wonder these young bards hastened in our direction. Among them were many who have since achieved real fame. I am happy if I helped them along the first stony road.

Gouverneur Morris was another writer who arrived in the morning mail-basket. His verses revealed humor and whimsicality; his short stories, that feeling for the dramatic which has stood him in such good stead. How he could make the jaded reader sit up, and even forget to go out to luncheon!—I should say that is a great literary achievement.

But one day a story in such an original vein came in that I shouted for joy. The author lived in the South; and though we published dozens of his yarns, he never seemed to appear elsewhere. I couldn't understand this. Indeed, no sooner did a new writer come one's way, through the grace of God, than a rival periodical would wish to snatch him away; and I used to live in terror of the hour when Henry Sydnor Harrison would write me that, unless we raised his rate, he would be forced to send his work to one of our contemporaries. But he never did. Instead, he sent us his happy manuscripts in rapid succession, and it was not until years later, when I first met him face to face, that he told me no one else ever seemed to care for his stuff. He had tried frequently to place his yarns in other places, to broaden out, increase his audience—but in vain. I am betraying no editorial secret in speaking of this now, since the author of "Queed" has himself told of this in "The Atlantic Monthly". It is the most curious case of a lack of recognition that I have ever known; for here was a man of striking ability. Yet editorial doors were closed and barred to him. I experienced much satisfaction, I must say, when his first novel brought him fame overnight. He justified himself—and me—for he proved no one-novel writer, no mere flash in the pan. "V. V.'s Eyes" followed "Queed", and ran it a close second in popularity.

Guy Bolton, who has since made a name for himself as a playwright, was another "discovery" of those halcyon days; and if his stories were not so

good as those of the others I have mentioned, they had youthful vigor and a certain readable quality that caused them to stand out in the day's mail.

You see how thrilling the day's mail must have been to me! No wonder I love it; though I have to admit it holds no such gems now. Is this the editor's fault, or the fault of the writers? I know I am just as eager as ever for the new note in fiction. I am certain I have lost none of my enthusiasm for my work—I who have been called Peter Pan! Moreover, my brothers in the craft tell me they have the same sad experience. We watch breathlessly for the postman; but he brings us practically nothing. The whole scheme of things has changed. Where ten—even five—years ago we sat and waited for the promising genius to come to us, we must now go out in the highways and byways, advertise, scream our heads off, use a telescope and a sounding device.

I am not joking. The good first yarn does not seem to be produced any more. Yet everyone is writing.

Yes! but not for the magazines. For the movies.

Let us analyze the situation. Rates have gone up in all the periodicals, of course, since those unbelievable days when an O. Henry story could be purchased for seventeen dollars. Never has there been a time when a young author could so thrive and prosper. Three hundred dollars is frequently paid for a first story. Then, if it makes an impression, the writer's rate swiftly goes up; and in two years I have known a man to have his price tripled. But a good short story is difficult to produce. It means hours, days, weeks, even months of drudgery sometimes, and the cost of living has increased. Along came the movies, needing scenarios even more than we editors need fiction. They seem to cry out to aspiring writers, "Why toil over characterization and description for the magazines, when all you need to supply us with is a plot? We do the rest!" And it is so. Perhaps anyone but a conscientious artist would be a fool who did not seize the royal chance offered by the motion-picture people and get a thousand dollars for a few typewritten pages of manuscript, instead of working interminable days over a yarn that would bring him only half that amount, and not be read in the end by one-third as many people as would see his scenario on the screen.

Maybe the process will be reversed from now on. Perhaps we magazine editors will have to ask to see the synopses sent in to the motion-picture offices, and buy the magazine rights! Stranger things have happened. A plot is a plot. It is the development of it that makes it acceptable; and if the actors and producers develop it in one way, we could develop it in another. Instead of dramatizing a story, we would novelize a drama. And who knows but that we would double our clientele through such a method?

I was connected with the magazine that found Edna Ferber one morning, and we all knew that a real discovery had been made. John S. Phillips used to pass a certain friend in the street every afternoon, with his manuscript case tightly clutched under his arm. "I never let go of it in the train", he would say, "for who knows what it may contain? The One Great Thing may be here!" patting the bag affectionately.

And it may! That's the best part of it. Who could become blasé with such a prospect always before one?

Second only to discovering some

writer is the happiness of assisting in the development of that same writer. Seldom indeed is a fine story so perfect that it can be printed exactly as it was written. If that were the case, office boys might be editors, or we could close our desks and leave things in the hands of stenographers. An altered phrase here or there, a change of title, even, may lift a story from downright mediocrity to the heights; and how many an amateur owes his later success to some anonymous editor or manuscript reader, the world will never know. Plots by the score are given out, and the author takes all the credit. Let us never forget, however, how essential plots are in this business of writing; yet reward comes when an author who does not forget dedicates his volume of short stories, or his novel to you, and inscribes on the title-page something like this: "To————, the kindest editor I've ever known", or "To J————, who made this book possible, from his grateful J. M." And there isn't much ingratitude in our profession. There is good fellowship and friendliness, and I can truthfully say that I've never regretted one idea I've given out if it has helped to make an extra few dollars for some writer friend.

II

Of course the great charm of being an editor is that you are in the position of buying instead of selling—always a more pleasant occupation. The well-known writer, I have found, is usually a charming companion. I know very few bores in the literary world; I know plenty elsewhere. One reason is that the creative artist keeps his youth to a remarkable degree. He is eternally the boy, and even when his hair grows thin and white, he keeps his youthful heart, his humor, his freshness of spirit. Add to that the fact that generally when he lunches with you it is for the purpose of talking over a new series of stories, or a serial, and you have the psychology of it all in a nutshell. One's own work is the most important thing to us all; to an artist it is everything; and if you bring an idea to a writer you are bringing him thousands of dollars, sealing your friendship with him, and having a jolly fine time in the bargain.

I have never had a quarrel with a writer but once in my life; and I have had but two or three business misunderstandings. These latter were in each case adjusted to the satisfaction of us both. I wonder how many business men have so good a record with their clients? One's magazine becomes one's child; and when it is praised you feel just as the parent does who likes to learn that others think his offspring has been well brought up.

Once I had a curious experience. In addition to my editorial work, I try to keep my hand in by writing a bit now and then—not a great deal, but enough to improve any idle hours I may have. In opening the fascinating morning mail one day I began to read a story that sounded exceedingly familiar. As I went on to the second page, I could scarcely believe my senses; for the yarn was one I had written myself and published several years before. It was submitted to my magazine as original by a woman in the middle West. At first I thought someone was playing a joke on me; but this did not prove the case. I wrote Miss L——— that I admired not only her beautiful typewriting, but her writing, and her exquisite taste; and I told her that, with such

fine judgment, she should go far—in another direction from mine. Naturally, I never heard from her again.

We strike plagiarists occasionally, and they are an offensive lot. A weary editor cannot read all the other magazines—that goes without saying. Years ago I remember a manuscript being passed up to me—why, I cannot recall now, for every reader in the office had turned it down for some good reason. I immediately bought it, and rather reprimanded those who had considered it first, saying I was glad it had not been allowed to leave the editorial rooms without my casting my eye over it. After it had been published, that indefatigable reader who generally lives in Kansas City or Kalamazoo wrote in to say that it might interest us to know that the same story had appeared five years before in "The Atlantic". Only the title and the hero's name had been altered. I had my little laugh on our readers; for if a story met with the favor of the discriminating editor of "The Atlantic", I had surely made no mistake in purchasing it.

Recently a young man in the uniform of the United States army, I am sorry to say, sent me a baseball yarn that was so good I immediately accepted it. Then I sent for him, talked with him about future work for a half-hour, liked him tremendously, handed him a check for a goodly sum, and sent him away happy. No wonder! For it developed later that he was a dead-beat. He had copied the yarn almost verbatim from another periodical, and when I wrote him of my discovery he brazenly denied that he had ever read a copy of that magazine. But he returned our check.

Speaking of the army reminds me that many a young man, hitherto inarticulate, has become eloquent on paper after his experiences in France. Life has opened up to these boys; and in that brief whirlwind of days they have known twenty years of agony and high adventure; and many of them, fortunately, have been able to embalm their rapture or their sorrow. Some of their manuscripts have been remarkable. Whether or not they will ever write again does not so greatly matter. They had something definite to say; and they said it.

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CURRENT TASTE IN FICTION: A QUARTERLY SURVEY

BY JOHN WALCOTT

IT'S not the easiest thing in the world for any one of us to make out at any moment what the majority of us want—in the way of fiction or anything else. Some people say that even publishers and theatrical managers, who live with their ears to the ground, at times guess wrong. And laying down the law about the theatre-goer and the reading public is putting your finger on a ball of quicksilver. It looked solid enough a second ago, but where the dickens is it now? Maybe it wasn't there at all!

What kind of novels are people in general wanting at this particular moment? Well, to put it negatively, the tendency just now is first of all away from war fiction. Our story-tellers have by this got their early impressions and reactions pretty well off their chests. We were glad to have the record of them. But on the whole they turned out to be a bit monotonous: too many Britlings, too many young V. C.'s and hyphenate spies and Red Cross maidens and so on. Now we are ready to turn away from them as a little earlier we turned away from books of personal experience in the trenches. We are glad to move on from this field of minor fancy and, if we are going to bother with the war, to listen to what the big fellows are having to say: Foch and Jellicoe and Von Tirpitz telling us all about things from the inside. These major depositions, to be sure, are only material for the history and literature of later days. The time will come when the story-tellers will get their second wind and second thought. Out of all the sifted facts and varying impressions and balanced testimony of the earlier war-writing, some novelist will rise to mold for posterity a really masterful interpretation. Meanwhile, as I have said, the tendency of novel-readers is away from the new war novels, and toward either "non-fiction" or other kinds of fiction.

There is evidence on the other side, you say. How about the everlasting "Four Horsemen" who still seem to be so easily holding the lead against all comers? Doesn't the war come into a dozen other novels people are reading now? Yes, in a way. Plenty of the fiction in demand is war-tinctured or war-conditioned, from the emotional "Tin Soldier" or the bright "Christopher and Columbus" to—whatever serious novel of current life you may choose to name. Not long since the New York "Times" gave a list of two hundred "leading fall books". Seventy-nine of them came under the head of fiction. Throwing out a score of books of short stories and other odds and ends,—boys' books and so on,—we have left some fifty novels of some pretensions, in length at least. And about thirty of them have to do with the war, if only as a background or a casual scene. A round dozen seem to have been built squarely on the war motive in one form or another. But of course in making note of this, we have got to keep in mind the fact behind it—that all current life is built squarely on the war motive. All fiction of

today is in a sense war fiction. Only the meaning of the term has moved on. What we mean by a war novel now is something rather aggressively about battles and campaigns, and personal agonies and triumphs. Coningsby Dawson's "The Test of Scarlet" is a straight challenge in this field, and it will be interesting to see whether the big public he had in wartime sticks to him in the face of the general trend toward fields of peace.

In one highly specialized department of fiction, the "boys' book" department, the war has taken what looks like a permanent place. This is perfectly natural. The old peacetime motives for boyish adventure are relatively few. The boys, you may say, never get tired of them—the buried treasure, the shipwreck, the bandit, the secret cave, the black-hearted son of a gun around the corner whose knavish tricks have got to be confounded if it takes a leg. But they must be frightfully tiresome for the fellow who grinds out the stories. How he must have welcomed (as a laborer) the new late war, with its endless possibilities for change of scene and recoloring of situation. How pitiful the secret cave in the back yard and the privateering cruise in the family catboat look to him now, when every island may hold a wireless station, and every cove be a secret base for the U-boat that (oh, yes, there was Jules Verne's "Nautilus" but what modern boy knows it?) added a dimension to juvenile romance, in the act of adding a major problem to war. Writing boy-fiction ought to have real fun in it for some time to come. And as it never does any harm for a writer to have a bit of spontaneous interest in what he is working at, the quality of that particular product may come up noticeably. I for one can't see that the modern boy-stuff beats Oliver Optic of beloved memory, and as for Jules Verne (pronounced Jools Vurn) it can't hold a candle to him. However, each generation to its own tastes,—there are members of my household who find a good deal to say for certain works of the hour named "Vive la France" and "Fortunes of War",—and I wish I were young enough myself to give them a fair chance, or rather to give myself a fair chance with them!

Even for boys, the war hasn't displaced by so much as a hair that perennial staple of romance which is embodied for us Americans chiefly in the convention of the Wild West. It was all very well for Owen Wister to assure us sadly (as he did some twenty years ago) that even his own Virginian is a memory, and that the romantic life of the cowboy and the miner are gone forever. Gone forever they may be from the literal and physical face of the land. Gone they may some time be from the foreground of our romantic fancy, to join the earlier romantic types of Cooper. As Leatherstocking vanished into limbo with the Indian of the open, so the cowboy, according to Mr. Wister, vanished with the free range. Later chroniclers have been slow to acknowledge this, but our wild romancers are now showing a discreet tendency to shift their wildness to the northwest, where something like elbow-room still exists. Still, there is undoubtedly a vast and easy audience which doesn't pretend to care a rap about points of compass or other points of fact. It simply wants the wild western kind of yarn; and wanting something of a kind isn't wanting something different. Now it wouldn't be safe to assert that real out-of-doors people don't read this alleged out-of-doors fiction.

In Wallace Irwin's amusing "Venus in the East"—wasn't it?—there was one really "immense" situation. His hero comes East from the mining country to spend his "pile". In New York he meets another lonely voyager from the West. Neither is without appropriate uncouthness but neither has ever "packed a gun" or done any of the lively and conventionally unconventional things that go with packing a gun, such as cleaning out the bank at faro, or shooting up the town. And they can think of nothing better to do on Broadway than to go to a movie show where the Wild West, to their interest and gratification, is put through all her famous parlor tricks for their benefit.

But if it has the advantage of unreality for such as these, think what it is bound to have for us others! The Wild West business, the range and trail stuff, are above all fodder for people who are condemned to be sedentary and city-bound. Critics have complained of the monotony of this kind of product, the small pains apparently taken to infuse any real novelty into the performance. But this is part of its merit. This saves us trouble. Its very monotony is restful. Not only does the other fellow ride and shoot and suffer for us: he does it, as it were, according to Hoyle. His daredevilishness is safe and sane, for all its surface display; for it always follows the rules. Therefore the small boy in us exults, while the man in us reflects complacently that there is nothing really to worry about. Thus our surface nerves are agreeably titivated while our human sympathies and our common sense take a day off. "Dope" is the word of opprobrium it is easy to fling at this kind of commodity. Adventure by proxy, thrilling but painless, would be a more generous definition. Stories of the war, while the war was going on, could not be quite painless. Physical heroism was tangled up with so many other uncomfortable things. It was a war we had found no formula for, and we had an uneasy suspicion that there was mighty little romance tied up with its obvious squalors and horrors. Meanwhile the formula for wilderness-adventure stood pat. Its readers knew what to count on in that quarter, and this was a huge consolation when so many of the standards of "real" life seemed to have turned rickety all of a sudden. Therefore we had the constant spectacle, throughout the war, of an absolutely steady demand for stories about cowboys and desperadoes and the open range and the long trail. And since the fighting stopped, reports come in, from more than one direction, that the demand for them is bigger than ever.

Hardly second in steadiness to this clientele of vicarious rough-stuff, are the devotees of the detective story, in which not brawn and courage are the main figures but cunning and subtlety. One kind of tale is the apotheosis of the strong-arm champion, the other is that of the equally popular "wise guy". Both flatter us—the one with our assistance (at least in the French sense) at scenes of remarkable danger and daring, the other with our share in actual sleuth-work. And the second illusion is less of a strain on our fancy than the first. We may perforce acknowledge that nature and training have denied us the thews and "pep" of the fellow who knocks out seven knifing greasers with his bare fists, or mushes a hundred miles in a day with a blizzard raging at forty below. But who is to tell the world (and get away with it) that we are

not, in secret, the real wise guys from guyville? Who is to keep us from guessing, with the aid of our remarkable mental endowment, powers of deduction and so on, who the real murderer was?—long before the bungler from Scotland Yard succumbs to the brilliant amateur whose inspired infallibility we happen to share? No, there is no end to the self-gratulatory thrills we wise guys are bound to feel in the presence of that "rattling good" detective story which authorities like Roosevelt and Wilson have united in exalting.

Nobody so far as I know has happened on the phrase "prattling good". I suggest it for standardization in connection with another staple variety of fiction which has as steadfast a constituency as either the out-of-doors or the detective story — to wit, the moral-sentimental romance of the Dells, the Porters, the Wrights, and their compeers. Whatever you may wonder as to fluctuations of taste in connection with other brands of novel, you know very certainly that there has been no fluctuating among that huge and faithful constituency. The war may have flavored their kind of goods for a year or two (see "The Tin Soldier"); so much the better for the war and none the worse for us. No use in belittling this fiction; it has its purpose and serves it well. You may call it pap or soothing syrup, but there are times when it is better to be soothed than, as the English say, to be poked in the eye with a burnt stick. From a "sternly critical" point of view the only drawback is that so many of the beneficiaries of this treatment fancy themselves being quite actively and even strenuously "literary"—great hands to read, because they "keep up" with this style of novel, and this style alone. However, our point here is that the taste, or market, for these three relatively simple and standardized types of fiction,—the out-of-doors story, the detective story, and the sentimental story,—has been rather intensified than otherwise by reaction from the unsettling strain of the war and its aftermath. Goodness, Maria, what's going to come of us all? It's discouraging to open the paper, and if you look out of the window there's a strike opposite or a Bolshevik procession going by. Let's put a stick on the fire, turn our easy chairs to it, put our feet on the fender, and comfort our souls for a few moments with this rattling good or that sweet-pretty story, which the kind writing gentlemen have provided for people like us!

Another relatively simple form of tale received some impetus from the war, and seems to have been in fair demand since: the psychical mystery story. As for the war mystery story, of plots, secret-service men, propaganda and all, there is a distinct falling off (except in the juvenile field I have spoken of) in the call at the bookstores and the public libraries. The trend is back toward the plainer and more restful stuff, the quiet murder of one's next-door neighbor, or the robbery of one's own marble-fronted bank—or their recognizable equivalents. As for books of combined mystery and adventure,—books primarily of incident and action rather than of analysis and detection, —they seem to have come into unusual acceptance. And it is noticeable that the majority of them now choose the exotic setting, the Orient or the South Seas, China, India, Turkey, Hawaii—and steer pretty clear of the complications induced by events since the year 1914.

For the novel that depends for

glamour on remoteness in time, that is, the historical romance, there is a very limited audience in these days. Or perhaps it is truer to say that the favored degree of remoteness isn't what it used to be. We seem to be remarkably responsive just now to the charm of the past that has only just become the past. We may be tired of the gadzooks and swashbuckler kind of thing; but in the stories of Joseph Hergesheimer and others, the age of pantalets and even the decade of the bustle are yielding an unexpected charm. As for the home-bred novel of place, there has never been so good a hearing for tales of honest "localism", to use Mr. Howells's word. From Theodore Dreiser's naturalistic America through a considerable range of realism and sentimentalism to Booth Tarkington's romantic America, we run pretty much the whole gamut of national and social life. The story is increasingly one of social and industrial change. The fact that the forces of revolution and of reaction are pressing so much more closely and relentlessly upon every one of us has no doubt a lot to do with our increased response to fiction dealing with these forces and their manifestation in the life about us. A year or two ago the causes of socialism and of better conditions for labor still seemed to most novel-readers matters of "academic" or at least secondary importance. Now we have not socialism but its rude supplanter, syndicalism, as our uncomfortable bedfellow, with labor making a strong bid—not for equality but for the annihilation of capital. My goodness, Maria. . . Here, you be seeing what this fellow Chambers has to say in "The Crimson Tide", about what's coming to the world, and I'll have a look at this here Frenchman, Barbooss. Wilkins says his story "Light" ends up in a regular three cheers for the Bolshevists!

One thing I notice, however, about the, say, two-score novels of serious intent among the last few months' output, — that about half of them are studies of certain individual or family problems which the special exigencies of these past years have heightened and brought to the surface rather than essentially changed. On the whole the sensational sex novels have become if not less numerous at least less a subject of burning controversy. Perhaps we are beginning to reap the reward of having thrown the Young Person overboard a decade since. Having named pretty much all the spades by name and stripped sex of its false Victorian glamour of mystery and reticence, we are finding ourselves less interested in sex. We seem almost to have disposed of its rawest phase, as the main theme, and are able to concentrate our attention on other matters. Better or worse, it will always be with us, but we can afford to take it for granted now and then, for a change. Anyhow, that is the mood a majority of novel-readers seem to be in just now. Even if sex is what we live for, it isn't necessarily what we live by; and we needn't be always either talking or thinking about it.

Among the domestic problem novels of course the problem of marriage still holds and will always hold precedence—in spite of the fact that the phenomena of marriage might naturally by now have passed beyond the problematical stage. The thing that really keeps the problem game going, I suppose, is the fact that every generation makes anew the discovery that marriage under current conditions has become quite a novel state! With

us, of course, the emancipation of woman from the tyranny of Our Late Queen has wound up the clock of discussion all over again. Marriage! why, my dear man, it's only an arrangement some women choose more or less to make. Why should I marry you when I have my own life to live, and am quite capable of becoming Economically Independent and all that? . . . There is a good deal of this kind of thing among the latest novels, especially the novels by women. But I see indications in the character of their total output that we may be on the road back to the more genial and homelike bailiwick of the Triangle. You can't beat the two and one formula until human nature, as well as human theory, has definitely become something different from what it is now and has always been.

Finally I gather from various sources an intimation that the novel of temperament has by no means lost its attraction for a considerable following. I have suspected at times that all this story-writing about artists was merely an indication of the egotism of the artist tribe: that the public really didn't care a hoot for painters and writers and singers in print any more than it does in real life. But I must have been wrong. People evidently do read and admire these tales of genius, of which, from "The Passionate Pilgrim" of Samuel Merwin to "The Moon and Sixpence" of Somerset Maugham, the present season offers some very considerable examples, in number and in quality.

For the immediate future our problem will not be altogether what we want, but what we can get. Book type has to be set as well as magazine type, and the public must wait upon its temporary masters, in some degree,—or must prove their independence by retrenchment. However, a bookseller, in shaking his head over the prospects for a meagre output of new fiction, lets fall in my ear the cheerful aside that since people are bound to buy something, there is a fair prospect of clearing the shelves of a lot of old stuff, during the coming months. An ill wind for the publishers, though.

COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

The Simple Pleasure of Splitting Infinitives

THE time has come to oppose the movement which tends to abridge the individual's right to split infinitives. Such a movement, it occurs to me, is a direct blow at personal liberty and should not be countenanced in a land of the free. Can you imagine anybody trying to prevent Patrick Henry from splitting his infinitives? Certainly not. Then why should the American of today stand idly by and submit to such an imposition upon his personal freedom?

Here and there, men will be found who abuse the privilege by splitting more infinitives than necessary, but in the main, the practice causes little disturbance. Very certainly as long as a man splits his infinitives in the quiet precincts of his home and without neglecting his family, I, for one, do not believe that it is any of the public's business.

A man can split an infinitive occasionally and still be a good citizen, husband, and father. The custom is time-honored. Our grandfathers split their infinitives occasionally and yet the world has not produced a sterner, sturdier, more upright set of men. They could split an infinitive and go on about their business.

The growing tendency to restrict individual liberty has got to stop somewhere, otherwise this country will be worse than Russia before the Bolshevists assumed control. First, they stop us from using a singular verb with a plural subject and not satisfied with that reform, they go further and deny the public the privilege of ending a sentence with a preposition.

I did not make any serious objection to either of these reforms, though nobody likes to use a singular verb with a plural subject any more than I do. The more plural the subject, the more singular I like my verbs. And the same way with closing a sentence through the use of a preposition. I have always found these little words of great value in ending sentences. They always seem to set off a sentence with a sort of flourish, which may not be strictly according to the ethics of the occasion; but it looks nice to an old-fashioned soul like me.

But I bowed humbly when these reforms were inaugurated. I quit mixing plural subjects and singular verbs and am careful to avoid the use of a preposition too near the end of the sentence. I was willing to make that concession to the advancing trend of the times.

But the split infinitive is the issue upon which I propose to stand and upon which the nation should rally. It is nobody's business if I split an occasional infinitive in my own home in the company of my family or close, intimate friends. My father and his father before him believed in splitting infinitives. In fact, my grandfather always believed that it was his custom of splitting an infinitive before each meal that made it possible for him to reach such a ripe old age. We have always had infinitives on the family sideboard and any of us who felt like splitting one could do so and no questions were asked. In spite of

this, I have never seen any evil results from the practice. Let me modify this statement—a brother of mine did get slightly under the influence of split infinitives at a Christmas celebration, but I am inclined to believe that it was because he mixed the infinitives with inverted participles.

That is the atmosphere in which I have grown to manhood and there is nothing I like better than to bring out a nice, aged-in-the-wood infinitive and split it. It makes the whole day brighter for me and nobody is injured by it.

It may be all right to put some restrictions upon the public splitting of infinitives. Roadhouses where women are in the habit of splitting a mild infinitive should be kept under surveillance, although I have an aunt who was entirely relieved of asthma by splitting an infinitive each evening before retiring.

As far as splitting infinitives in the home is concerned, I certainly see no harm in it. On the other hand, the practice serves to stimulate the formation of character. A man is a better man when he reaches the point where he can split an infinitive or leave it alone. But if we begin to regulate the practice by law, the time will come when our young men will grow up with such a loose fiber of character that they will split infinitives to excess when the opportunity arises. And it won't be the splitting of well-made, time-ripened infinitives, either, but the poorest and wildest of wildcat infinitives, the splitting of which is not only injurious to the moral fabric but to the health as well.

Further than that, it occurs to me that it will be positively dangerous to suppress the simple pleasure of splitting infinitives without supplying some other simple pleasure as a substitute. After a man has been in the habit of splitting two or three infinitives a day just to be sociable, he undergoes a certain physical shock when that stimulation is suddenly and permanently removed. Under such circumstances he is apt to fall into the disastrous habit of shooting double negatives into his arm.

—HINTON GILMORE

Advice to Young Interviewers

INTERVIEWING was once a comfortable, law-abiding art, followed by studious and respectable men for the benefit of a public with simple tastes and tolerant hearts. In the quiet days before jazz bands, shimmying, shuttles, and snappy interviewing, it was permissible to begin one's article in some such fatuous way as this,—

When I saw Hall Caine lately in his sweet little home among the mountains of the Lake Country, he was bedding a row of heather the while he discussed some of his recent books with Malloch McClough, the well-known political leader.

The good-humored reader of the 'nineties knew that the interviewer could be depended upon in a reasonable course of time to ask Mr. Caine what he considered the trend of modern fiction to be, whether he thought there was much jealousy among literary men, and other questions of an equally popular and engrossing nature. In the meantime he was content to sentimentalize over the sweet little home and the Scotch heather. But the day has long since passed when people could afford to sentimentalize over homes and heather. Unless there is a very good reason no one wants to read of men in their own

homes, and you will give a deal more satisfaction if you take them out to lunch and, the old indirect method being intolerable at the present moment, snap up the attack in some such way as this:

"Fee-fi-fo-fum!" said Mr. Leacock as he lashed his chop to bits. "The bond between England and America ought to be subsidized. Moreover, there should be an accident policy for humorists. Suppose I lose my humor? What then? How could I go on with my political economy?"

If possible insert on the side little touches which will exhibit your large knowledge of the world. When interviewing Theodore Dreiser remember to mention that he is the brother of Paul Dresser, who wrote "Just tell them that you saw me". Many people who have never heard of Theodore Dreiser are intimate friends of that song. Do not fail to include in your article on the Countess Zodiac the fact that she wears digitated stockings. Everyone, be he great or small, will be interested in that. It is no longer permissible to describe a man as a "great big breezy athlete", or as "sitting at his desk in shirt-sleeves and sombrero, writing notices for the 'Daily Star' ". These primitive methods went out with horse-cars and bustles and, besides, the second phrase is indecent. I have seen a look almost of hatred pass over the face of a dignified playwright on reading a description of himself sitting in his shirt-sleeves. The fact that men no longer enjoy being called big and breezy proves that the latent good in our race is beginning to crop out.

There are rare occasions when the old-fashioned descriptive pattern might serve even yet, were it not for the odious habit of exacting promises from the long-suffering interviewer. Take the case of a Bulgarian prince, recently arrived in the country, whom it is your good fortune to have known in Roumania. You write to him laying bare a few facts concerning the article on his views of America which you are about to publish, and he replies most courteously, offering permission to quote him as having said anything. "But don't for the *nom de Dieu* say anything about my long painting smock, the green and purple studio, my temper, or the wolf-hounds; and don't, I implore, try to imitate my accent." He is a man familiar with the profession, and utterly heartless. The article is ruined, as you can see at a glance. Take away the wolf-hounds and the accent alone, and there is no use writing it.

Of all types the most annoying is the man who begins by telling you that he could interview you much better than you are interviewing him, he having been a police reporter on the Indianapolis "Record". Now this is all very well, and true no doubt, but why be cruel? He opens the interview thus:

"What did you conceive the inspiration of my book to be, Madame X?" It is impossible to answer. One of the best things about "The Earthworm" was a very evident lack of inspiration—and besides there isn't time. It is also unnecessary.

"Well, it was my wife", he laughs coyly; "you will find that she is the inspiration of all that I do. By the way, I should like to have her talk with you about her work on the psychoanalysts. I'll get her down."

We pass over the next hour.

Note: Beware of the man who tells you that his wife is the finest woman in the world. He has nothing

to say, or he wouldn't say that. Leave him untouched.

It is idle to suppose that interviews have really taken place. Such faith is not only childish but pitiful. In nine cases out of ten the interviewer plans the entire operation, writing out the questions and most of the answers, to save trouble; gets the celebrity's permission, and fits him in as neatly as may be. In the other nine cases the celebrity does the whole thing and leaves it to the interviewer to adjust himself. The second method is extremely pleasant, enabling the interviewer to make himself appear a really clever fellow —there is no limit, in fact, to what he can make of himself in this way.

Sometimes the subject eliminates himself entirely, and this is of all possibilities the most pleasant. We use as an illustration the altogether charming publisher whom you have been sent to question in the interest of the poets. He is a jolly, plump person, who greets you in the nicest way imaginable with,—

"Oh, let's not have any interview. I don't know anything about poetry. You come along and have some lunch with me, and then go back and say I have said anything you like; but don't worry me now. I have a meeting of publishers, underwriters, and landlords in an hour, and I need food."

The tenth case—i.e., the hand-to-hand interview where the principal and correspondent actually meet with serious intent—is likely to be painful all around. We do not deny that it is sometimes well for an interviewer to have met his victim, just as it is for a reviewer to have read his book; but unless it can be arranged in some underhanded manner, such as having the interviewer come disguised as a friend, and reveal his identity only upon the moment of departure, it is an inhuman proceeding, and should not be taken up by any except the stout-hearted and heavy-handed.

—CONSTANCE MURRAY GREENE

TELESCOPING TIME IN THE THEATRE

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS

THE last time I happened to pass through the Bowery,—it was in the early spring of 1918,—my heart was saddened by the sight of the Bowery Theatre, dingy, desolate, and deserted. Its ample and dignified portico was disfigured by outlandish and unattractive placards, possibly in Italian or more probably in Yiddish; I was carried past the desecrated playhouse too rapidly to discern which of these alien tongues had been employed. Either of them it might be, since each of them is the customary speech of several hundred thousand of the inhabitants of the Empire City. This violent eruption of foreign posters was evidence of the pitiful degradation of a former temple of the drama, which in its youth had been the home of the muses of tragedy and comedy.

Although I am now nearing the summit of three score years and ten, I am not old enough to remember the Old Bowery in the prime days of its youth, when its boards were trodden by Charlotte Cushman and Edwin Forrest, and when its walls echoed the sonorous eloquence of Shakespeare's loftiest dramas. Even before my time it had renounced its early tragic aspiration, and had become the abode of the strenuous and startling melodrama to which it had given its name. It was when I was of too tender an age to venture far afield, that I saw the lurid poster, proclaiming Mrs. D. W. Waller's bold performance of the "Duchess of Malfy", —very likely the last time that Webster's sinister and sanguinary tragedy was ever performed by professional actors.

Strive as I may, I find that I cannot recall with certainty when it was that I was first privileged to pass through the Bowery's broad portals or what the spectacle was to which I had been attracted; and yet I seem to remember it was then that I was first fascinated by Fanny Herring, either in "Mazeppa" or in "The French Spy". This must have been in the late 'sixties of the last century; and it was in the early 'eighties that I can recall the ancient playhouse more distinctly. It had ceased to be the Bowery, and it had become the Thalia, abandoning the flexible language of Shakespeare for the ruder dialect of Schiller; and there I saw and heard Conried's capable company in "The Merry War" of the earlier and greater Strauss. Still a little later I was invited to appreciate the noble Lear and the superb Mark Antony of Ludwig Barnay, excellent as the mad king and incomparable as the adroit and fiery orator.

Of course, the greater glory of the Bowery was when it was still the Bowery, and before it was disguised as the Thalia—while it was still the home of tragedy and melodrama. Around the venerable theatre as it was in the long years of its prosperity, there cluster a heterogeny of anecdotes kept alive in diverse theatrical memoirs and histrionic autobiographies. For example, it is recorded that Forrest so delighted in Hamlet's

"To be or not to be. . ." that he was wont to prolong it unduly,—some authorities even maintaining that on occasion his delivery of this single soliloquy took not less than five minutes! This protraction was once the cause for the exhibition of bad manners by a regular customer of the Bowery, who arose indignantly at the end of the fourth minute of Forrest's declamation declaring that he had paid his money to see a play and "not listen to a damned stump-speech!"

It was after the theatre had descended into frank melodrama, and while it was still loyal to our own language, that a perfervid performer named Kirby, whose memory is preserved only by this single anecdote, aroused the delirious enthusiasm of his compatriots—there were none but Americans on guard that night—by defying his enemies after he had been mortally wounded, and by beseeching his surviving comrades to wrap him up in the American flag and let him die!

There is yet another of these tales of long ago which returns to me, and which is not without significance to those who like to spy out the secrets and the principles of the playwright's craft. It was the generous custom of sixty and seventy years ago to provide not one melodrama but two—perhaps eight or ten acts in all, a solid feast for a single evening. Once upon a time, so the story goes, when the curtain fell for the first time, a stray sailor took up his long and inky playbill and read aloud the line informing the spectators that a year would elapse between the first and second act; whereupon he arose in disgust, and left the theatre, explaining that he could not wait twelve months to find out what was going to happen, as his ship was to sail for China the next morning.

It is obvious that the ancient mariner of this legend could not have been a frequent playgoer, or he would have been familiar with the fact that playwrights often ask the audience to accept a lapse of time between two acts even longer than a single year. And it is obvious also that if the unfortunate information had not been printed on the program, the sailor would have sat in his seat contentedly until the curtain rose again, and would then have discovered from the dialogue that the action of the second act was taking place a year after the action of the first act. If his attention had not been called to it in advance, the old salt would have accepted without cavil the condensation of twelve months into the five minutes of the intermission,—an indisputable impossibility, if we insist upon judging it by mater-of-fact standards.

II

Here we are face to face with one of the most interesting conventions of the drama. The playwright is limited to the two hours' traffic of the stage. How, then, is he to bring before us complex actions which may unroll themselves through the long years, and which almost inevitably must exceed in duration the hundred and twenty minutes that he has at his command? He is enabled to deal with a story running through many months, if need be—or at shortest covering the greater part of a single day,—only because the massed spectators of his play do not judge his procedure by the matter-of-fact standard of the old sailor; because they are willing to authorize him by an implied contract, accepted unconsciously by both parties, to depart

from the strict facts of life, if by so doing he can provide them that for which they have come to the theatre, —an interesting story shown in action. If the playwright can compact his sequence of situations into two hours, he may do it; but if he feels that he needs to stretch out the story from one year to another, even from one century to another, he is at liberty to do that also.

In the theatre we are all of us willing to permit the grossest departures from mere fact, if only the dramatist will hold us intensely interested by situations which (for the moment at least) seem to us true. There is a tacit agreement between us and the playwright that he is at liberty to do certain things which are contrary to the actual facts of life, when he can increase our pleasure by so doing. We are all well aware, for example, that every room has four walls and yet we do not protest when we find one wall omitted so that we can see what the actors are going to say in that three-sided room. We are all aware of this, I say, and yet we are so unconscious of it that we are a little inclined to resent having our attention called to it as Mr. Jerome did in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" and as Sir James Barrie did in "The New Word"—in both of which plays, a fender and fireplace down by the prompter's box serve to inform us that there is supposed to be a mantelpiece on the absent wall.

We may accept the convention unconsciously but it must be one that is acceptable to us, or the artist will be unable to proceed with his work; since if it is not acceptable, our attention will be called off from the story he is setting before us and arrested by the distracting departure from the fact. There is an anecdote from the history of another art which is illuminative of the necessary attitude of an audience in the theatre. It is recorded that when a painter made a profile portrait of a Sioux chief, the Indian (when it was shown to him) anxiously asked, "Where is the other side of my face?" If we are not willing to accept a profile portrait we limit the art of the painter; and if we are not willing to approve of the removal of the fourth wall and of the passage of a year between the acts, then we had better keep out of the theatre, since we are thereby denying ourselves the pleasure it can provide only if we are ready to grant to the playwright the licenses without which the art of the drama is impossible. As Lord Morley aptly put it in his life of Voltaire: "All art rests upon convention; and if we choose to repudiate any particular set of conventions, we have no more right to criticize the works of those who submit to these than we would have to criticize sculpture because marble and bronze is not like flesh and blood."

Of course a story is likely to grip us most strongly when it is compacted into a brief period of time; for example Ibsen has most skilfully condensed the appalling series of situations he has set before us in "Ghosts", in which the action is scarcely more protracted than the actual duration of the performance. On the other hand there are not a few plays in which the author has depended for his effect upon the contrast between different periods in the lives of his characters. Gilbert's "Sweethearts" is one example; in the first act (1841) we see the young lovers parting; while in the second and final act (1871) we see them meeting again after the lapse of thirty years, the woman recalling vividly all the de-

tails of their last meeting and smiling a little bitterly as she discovers that the man has forgotten them all.

In "The Will" by Sir James Barrie, we are again invited to observe the changes time has wrought in a pair of characters, the author setting before us three periods in the life of his hero and heroine. The author does not inform us exactly as to the number of years which elapse in each of the two intermissions; but he tells us that on the wall of the room which serves as the place for all three episodes, there is "a framed engraving of Queen Victoria, which dates sufficiently the opening scene and will be changed presently to King Edward; afterward to King George, to indicate the passing of time". By this device he is enabled to reveal to us the hardening of heart which may be caused by the worship of Mammon; and we are made to perceive the slow disintegration of character which may result from this insidious influence. Exactly the same device is employed in the "Milestones" of Edward Knoblock and Arnold Bennett. The three acts are twenty-five and twenty-three years apart in point of time; and we are invited to behold the transformation of an open-minded and ardent young radical into a stiff and indurated conservative forty-eight years later.

Cervantes allows one of the characters in "Don Quixote" to inquire "what can be more absurd than the introduction of the forest scene of the first act of a child in swaddling clothes, that in the second makes his appearance as a bearded man?" And yet Parisian audiences made no protest when the younger Dumas, in his "Fils Naturel", began his play with a prologue wherein we see the future hero in his cradle, while the action of the remainder of the play occurs when he has grown to man's estate. It is not the lapse of thirty years or of forty-eight, but of more than twenty centuries that another French playwright, Théodore Barrière, asked us to accept in his "Filles de Marbre", long popular on our stage as "The Marble Heart". The first act is a prologue, with its action passing in Athens in the days of Diogenes. It prefigures the action in the three succeeding divisions of the play which passes in Paris in the days of Napoleon the Third, and which is peopled with characters who are the reincarnation of those shown to us in the prophetic prologue. This separation of the time of one act from that of the other acts by more than a score of centuries, would have been totally and startlingly inacceptable to the unsophisticated sailor in the Old Bowery; yet it was willingly accepted by hundreds of thousands of spectators in Paris and New York.

It would have severely shocked Sir Philip Sidney—who protested sturdily against the undue distention of the story which was common in the Tudor theatre and which had been inherited from the loosely-knit mediæval miracle plays, wherein the whole life of the saint was unrolled before the delighted spectators, with no effort at compression or even at selection. Sidney protests:

> For ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love: after many traverses, she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child; and all this in two hours space; which how absurd it is in sense even sense may imagine, and art hath taught and all ancient examples justified.

III

Sidney died too early to behold the superb burgeoning of the Elizabethan drama; and even if he had survived,

it may be doubted whether even the affluent poetry and the subtle psychology of Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies would have reconciled him to the many departures from the strict standard which the Italian critics of the Renaissance had evolved from their inner consciousness and from their misreading of Aristotle. We may be sure that he would have been revolted by the license which Shakespeare took in the later nondescript pieces in which he was emulating the highly colored and widely popular dramatic-romances of his younger associates, Beaumont and Fletcher. In one of these later pieces, "A Winter's Tale", Shakespeare allowed himself a liberty even more liberal than any to be found in the plays of the clever collaborators. He permitted himself a yawning gulf of sixteen years between the first three acts and the last two. He seems to have been conscious of the violence of this procedure, so he sent on Time as Chorus to apologize for it:

> Impute it not a crime,
> To me or my swift passage, that I slide
> O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried
> Of that wide gap; since it is in my power
> To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour
> To plant and o'erwhelm custom. . . .
> . . . . Your patience this allowing,
> I turn my glass and give my scene such growing
> As you had slept between.

The supersubtle Italian critics had elaborated their code of dramatic laws from observation of the practice of the Attic tragedians, who in their most powerful plays referred to present only the culminating moments of a tragic story, and who therefore needed but a brief period in which to set forth their swift sequence of situations. Yet there is one Greek tragedy, and one of the very greatest, in which time is telescoped most arbitrarily and most effectively. In the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus we see first of all the watchman whom Clytemnestra has posted on the tower of the palace to report at once the flaring of the beacon-fire on a distant promontory—the nearest of a string of beacon-fires on the hilltops between Mycenæ and Troy, the lighting of which was to announce to the waiting Greek that the besieged city had fallen at last, and that the men of the expeditionary force were at liberty to return to their firesides and their families. A few minutes after the play begins, the watchman descries the welcome flame, and he descends to notify the queen that the king is finally free to begin his voyage back. The wireless message has sped in the space of an hour or two; and it would be days, if not weeks before the martial wanderers could make their way back. Yet only a little later a herald comes on confirming the news and announcing the immediate arrival of his master. And after a very short space of time Agamemnon return to be affectionately greeted by his guilty wife and to enter the palace where he is to be done to death by her paramour, Ægisthus.

Obviously this is a convention quite as flagrant as any of those in the Tudor drama to which Sidney resolutely objected. Yet we may be sure that it was not at all objectionable to the Athenians for whose benefit it was employed; to them it would be perfectly acceptable since they wanted to have Agamemnon return, and since they anticipated the fatal consequence of his home-coming to the house in which his honor had been betrayed. Yet Castelvetro, an Italian theorist of the theatre who, like his contemporaries, had little or no knowledge of the actual conditions of performance in

the playhouse itself, asserted categorically that "there is no possibility of making the spectators believe that many days and nights have passed when they themselves obviously know that only a few hours have actually elapsed; they refuse to be deceived."

In another Greek play, in the "Alcestis" of Euripides, not strictly a tragedy,—since it ends happily and since it contains the more or less comic character of the more or less intoxicated Hercules,—we find a rather ingenious method of filling up an interval of waiting. Alcestis has been borne away by Death, and Hercules volunteers to descend into Hades to bring her back. Time must be allowed for this dangerous journey down below; and the clever playwright uses as a stop-gap an episode of rather unseemly bickering between Admetus, the husband of Alcestis, and his father. This episode is necessarily brief but it is sufficient; and the Attic audience did not protest against the telescoping of time. Probably they remained as unconscious of it as a modern audience would be.

One of the most familiar speeches of Shakespeare is introduced where it is apparently in order that it may bridge over a similar interval. In "As You Like It", Orlando breaks in on the banished Duke and his companions at their banquet, and bids them eat no more until he can bring in the famishing Adam. Time must be allowed for Orlando to accomplish his benevolent purpose; and so Jacques is put forward to discant upon the seven ages of man. In this same play at the very end, when the action is about to be untied, there is an obvious digression while Touchstone discusses the seven degrees of the lie. At that culminating moment of the comedy this extraneous disquisition is plainly out of place, but it is here introduced for the simple reason that there is need of something brisk and lively to hold the attention of the spectators long enough to permit Rosalind to change from the costume of Ganymede to the habiliments proper to her sex, so that she may reveal herself to her father and give herself to her lover.

No doubt, Shakespeare could have provided a dialogue more strictly pertinent to his theme; but his audience was none too exacting and none too critical; and here, as so often elsewhere, he seems to have felt that what was satisfactory to the restless spectators, standing in the yard was not unsatisfactory to him. Oscar Wilde had to solve a problem of the same kind in the third act of "Lady Windemere's Fan"—an act ending with a strong situation, which must not be introduced too soon. The structure of the comedy is solidly built, but it is decorated with witticisms of all sorts; and in filling this gap in his third act the playwright chose to rely solely upon the clever things he had accumulated in his note-book. The action is intermitted while the characters swap "epigrams", socalled—merry jests of one kind or another, repartees and maxims, not strictly related to the story, and inserted for their own sake merely to pass the time until the moment should arrive to spring the surprise with which the act will be closed. And probably no one appreciated more keenly than Wilde himself the cleverness of the corresponding scene in the delightful parody written by Charles Brookfield, who caused the characters to seat themselves in a single row, like the semicircle of the negro minstrels, with an interlocutor and two end-men.

It is to a similar necessity of bridging over from one episode to another that we owe the beautiful intermezzo of Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana". The scenery is the same for the second act as it was for the first; and in Verga's play (from which the opera is taken) the curtain drops to divide the action in two.

IV

A search through dramatic literature from the ancients to the moderns, would certainly disclose other examples of difficulty conquered by playwrights who had to mask as best they could an interval wherein nothing happened which was likely to interest the spectators. It was left for one of the most modern of the moderns, Sir Arthur Pinero, to make use of a new device which would enable him to dodge this difficulty. In the middle of the first act of his "Iris", originally performed in the first year of the twentieth century, the curtain falls to rise again immediately; and the program notifies us that this is to indicate a lapse of time while the characters are at dinner; and the third act is also bisected in the same manner. Here we have a bold novelty; and it proposed a convention which audiences had not before been called upon to accept. But they did accept it, immediately and without hesitation.

Novel as was this device, its utility was perceived at once; and we need not be surprised to note that Sir Arthur's ingenious invention has been borrowed more than once by younger playwrights. It made easier the dramatization of Arnold Bennett's novel "Buried Alive" which he called "The Great Adventure", and it facilitated also the dramatization of Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen". Convenient as it is, it could not have been employed by Shakespeare in the curtainless platform of his time; and it was equally impossible on the old apron-stage of our grandfathers, on which the time would have been filled by a comic "front scene", played before a pair of flats, thrust on and run off. It could have been thought of only after that apron-stage had slowly transformed itself into the picture-frame stage with which alone we are now familiar. Here again we cannot help seeing the imperative influence exerted upon the technique of the drama and upon the methods of the playwright by the circumstances of the theatre for which he is composing his plays,—the theatre of his own time and of his own country.

A NEW PAGE ABOUT O. HENRY

BY JOHN SEYMOUR WOOD

TWELVE stories, new in the sense of not having been heretofore published in book form,—two afterward rewritten, one finished by another hand,—together with critical and biographical comments upon our American de Maupassant, form the recently published O. Henry book, "Waifs and Strays". It is an excellent successor to "Rolling Stones" (1913), and to Professor Smith's well-known biography of a life "full of paradox and failure, and achievement as any story from his pen". These twelve stories are the last gleaning of the sheaves, and are not up to the high watermark of the author. They will add nothing to his reputation but they are O. Henry's; and the book—with Mr. Maurice's interesting "About New York with O. Henry", and Mr. Nathan's "O. Henry in His Own Bagdad", and Professor Leacock's "The Amazing Genius of O. Henry"—will constitute a desirable, if not necessary, addition to the volumes already published.

The fame of O. Henry widens continually. It behooves everyone who knew him, even in the slightest degree, to add his impressions, while he may, of the modest, reticent southerner.

On a certain very warm night in August, "the big hall with its smoky rafters, rows of imported steins, portrait of Goethe, and verses painted on the wall atmospherically correct when viewed through the bottom of a glass", was crowded with "customers", and the usual table near the stairway presided over by Waiter 18, was occupied. Robert Whiting, who followed O. Henry into the Bierhalle, led him over to our table and introduced us, and there we sat and chatted till late over steins of Munchnerhofbrau—cold, delicious, and making us forget the 89 degrees of Fahrenheit.

The Bierhalle, which O. Henry designated as Old Munich, was then presided over by Papa Goerwitz, a talkative, kindly old German, who had dyed his white hair and whiskers a startling black by way of renewing his youth and making himself one with the *jeunesse doré* of the East Side. It was his habit to play the genial host and it was not long before he took his stand near our table and joined in the conversation, while the orchestra played Walter's "Prize Song". Papa Goerwitz welcomed his steady customers, and had been known to waive the necessity of payment of the score "until next time" on several occasions and to upbraid 18, 19, or 20 for their ignorance of one of the attributes and failings of a true gentleman.

How long ago it seems! O. Henry, Bob Whiting, and old Goerwitz himself (in spite of renewing his youth) have long since departed. The war has obliterated the German; prohibition has damned good beer, and old Sheffel Hall has shuffled off into a temperance restaurant under another name.

At the time I first met O. Henry in Old Munich, he was not especially famous,—he was a novelty merely,—

and the editors had no means of knowing that his tales were remarkable. I have forgotten many things that we talked about. I recall that the first impression he made on me was that he was very retiring and reticent and almost morose, until the third or fourth stein, when he became jovial, and, I may say, vaudevillian. He seemed to me like a star artist from the Varieties . . . perhaps a headliner. He made puns. He used slang, localisms; he seemed the very opposite of Whiting, who preserved the tone of a cultivated college man. In appearance O. Henry was short, bourgeois, inclined to be stout, with a smooth, broad colorless face, dark hair and light grey eyes. He was well-bred—country well-bred. He had the polish of rusticity—perhaps he assumed it as did Artemus Ward.

I remember that the talk fell naturally upon magazines and editors; and he said that he had given up trying to hunt down the end of a story in the maze of advertisements where—in very fine print, after seeking through many pages—literature, such as it was, was being choked to death by commerce. Engineers and firemen, he said, were getting better pay for working their typewriters than their locomotives and street cleaners were turning their energies entirely to muckraking as more profitable. He had often wondered what had become of several valiant heroes in the Klondike who, he had read, set out to rescue magazine-cover heroines in the frozen North. He supposed they were successful, for it was the sacred canon of the editor to reject all unhappy endings. As to rejection slips, of course he hardly knew what they were like . . . he had heard them spoken of disrespectfully several times . . . he himself, believed editors were infallible.

I never read his amusing burlesque, "A Sacrifice Hit", without picturing O. Henry, that night, smoking his cigar leisurely, sipping his stein of German silver with glass bottom, and poking fun at readers and editors. His belief in their infallibility may be doubted.

That first night I met him, he was jolly and talkative, as I say, after the Muncherhofbrau had warmed the cockles of his heart. On another occasion he was reticent and hardly opened his lips. I met him a number of times on Irving Place, for I lived around the corner from him; and one time I took him into a club on Gramercy Park, but I have forgotten it if he said anything of special pertinence. He was inclined to be reserved and non-committal. The other day I talked with a gentleman who worked on the "sober side of his bar" in that neighborhood. His place was opposite to where O. Henry lived and worked several years. "He was a silent man", said Con, "often he'd come in here—often I seen him set there in the seat in the bay near the door with his glass an' his newspaper before him. He never drank cocktails, an' he wasn't much of a drinker at that; he'd set dreamin' and smokin' an' thinkin' up his stories, I suppose. He never spoke to no one; he minded his own business. Yes, he put me in two of his stories. He told me to watch 'The World', and how he'd laugh! He was often short—money would slip through his fingers; yet if he'd lived he'd been a very rich man (Con became very sad over that)—an' he died, a poor man, of cirrhosis of the liver. I'd 'a went up to his funeral at the Little Church Round the Corner, but I couldn't get off."

I confess it is difficult to reconcile my first impressions of O. Henry—

the conception of a bright, provincial reporter—with the exalted personage I now recognize him to be after adsorbing *en masse* his wonderful stories. He must be judged by his entire work. A few of his stories are inferior, common, and unworthy of him; but they are few and far between, and even the poorest of them bears the stamp of his personality.

Waifs and Strays. By O. Henry. Doubleday, Page and Co.

BALLADE OF LADIES OF THE PRINTED PAGE

BY ARCHIE AUSTIN COATES

FROM the dawn of time, the poet wrought
In words, his song of the lady fair—
Helen, by kingly lovers sought,
Chloe with virginal, unbound hair;
Yseult in regal silk and *vaire*,
Beatrice of the Milky Way. . . .
How do the dames we know compare,
Lissome ladies of yesterday?

Peter's Joan romps untaught. . . .
(Mignon's was a more graceful flair!)
Sylvia Scarlett, adventure-fraught,
Listed the hearts she would ensnare;
Galsworthy's Evie did not care
For the church, the Book, or the wedding-lay—
Where have you fled to, flown to . . . where,
Lissome ladies of yesterday?

Our heroine now is Mammon-bought,
Or she burns men's souls with a scorching stare;
Her heart's in shreds from battles fought,
Her mind's a seething market-square!
Where is the calm and quiet air
Of gardens, and the twilights grey?
What has become of the debonair
Lissome ladies of yesterday?

ENVOY

Makers of books, no pains ye spare
To give us heroines grave and gay—
But, oh for the bygone line of rare
Lissome ladies of yesterday!

NOVELS OF VARIOUS WORLDS

By H. W. BOYNTON

MR. HOWELLS'S high praise of "The Great Desire" seems based largely on a sense of its honesty and power as a picture of things as they are. But a picture of things as they are is never of much use or interest unless it is done in the light of things as they are not. The only way we can interpret reality to any purpose is by forgetting a lot of facts to begin with, and arranging the rest so that they will mean something intelligible from some one point of view. The burden of "The Great Desire" is not set down upon a phonographic record, but hovers like a wistful half-heard melody in the atmosphere of the story. What is the great desire of this one, of that one, of myself? What do we want most out of life and how far does our happiness hang on our getting it?

The "myself" of this tale is a young American whom fate has done her best to relegate to the rôle of observer and bystander. A fall in childhood has made him a hunchback. He is the son of an up-state, country-town physician (New York), and as a young man feels constrained to come down to the city, with his beautiful sister, for more spacious living. Primarily, he wishes to write a book, a novel, "The Great Desire", which shall plumb the depths of the world's hunger—and his own. This modest object is to be unfulfilled. He is not overlong in discovering and announcing, as others have before and after him, that it is both easier and more profitable to "live" a book than to write it. In truth, our impression is that his labors at the typewriter are more perfunctory than is common in such cases.

And in truth they could have little chance in the face of the volutions of plot to which we and the hero almost at once find ourselves committed. For with all its realism of detail, its graphic touches of New York life in its back-streets and sweat-shops as well as in its drawing-rooms and studios, it is as fantastic a romance as the rudest blasphemer of Mr. Howells's household gods, the gods of Realism, could ask for. Its coincidences, its cross-purposes and mystifications, its highly artificial proper names, its stoutly constructed but flimsily imagined happy ending, all cry aloud for soft music and the faithful spotlight.

And yet, though I don't see the novelty or power in the book that Mr. Howells sees, I agree with him that it is a book of fresh savor and genuine charm. The war comes into it, and the social and industrial turmoil of our time. In it we glimpse reflected the manifold spectacle of our day—a groping, uncertain, yet not hopeless business, in a fundamentally sane world. As Mr. Howells puts it, "the book is no more indecent than the book of average life, which I believe is saying a great deal." As for the idea of the story, it is developed more naturally than the characterization or the plot—to a summation which after all owes its effectiveness largely to the plot. Here in the end we once

more rediscover the sun: perceive that the great desire of mankind, however obscured or forgotten, is not the desire of pleasure or of possessions or of physical freedom or what-not, but "the desire to find God". The dying Zorn, who formulates the matter, cries:

> You can read it in the hysteria of infidels, screaming as women scream in the denial of their own wish. You can read it in the worship of Agni as readily as in the scientific sneer about a "divine syndicate". The man-ape strutting in the primeval forest didn't know what ailed him. The educated ape in the laboratory often is quite as blind to his own hunger.

Hunger, desire, quest: neither Zorn nor his creator sees ahead of us anything more than a process of finding, of getting. A more resonant and firmer note was struck the other day in "The Great Hunger" of Johan Bojer. The revelation there, you remember, was that man does not merely discover divinity, he creates divinity. It is he who makes the beauty of human life: "In the midst of his torments he has had so much surplus energy that he has sent it radiating forth into the cold deeps of space and warmed them with God."

I have a suspicion that "The Face of the World", now given in English, may be an earlier novel of Bojer's. It seems to me, at all events, a slightly less majestic though beautiful handling of much the same theme as that of "The Great Hunger". Its people do not so quietly and irresistibly possess themselves of us. Its action is less quiveringly alive before our eyes; and its conclusion has the beauty of wistfulness, not of triumph. Harold Mark is an idealist who finds his dreams of human progress, and his attempts at personal usefulness in the world alike broken on the wheel of reality. Brutal misapprehension, petty malice, and pettier chance have brought his life to naught. Finally his soul is rudderless, his mind a whirl of negations. What has he to live for, or to live by? It is a gross world—one can only take it or leave it in its grossness. His body is stricken with his soul's sickness, his despair has not far to go toward madness. "Dreams are a crime. The only realities are money, robbery, police, prisons, and war." Nobody can really do anything for others or for himself. "Faith! Very well. The only thing that can save me is faith. Faith in what? In an invisible ruler, who in his wisdom lets the world go as it goes?... In progress? In mankind? What am I to believe in?"

The answer comes to him, the revelation, through the strains of Beethoven played by the hands of a woman—by no means any woman—in the next room.

Some ten years ago, "The City of Beautiful Nonsense" was a very popular novel of its year. That was about the time when, under the sponsorship of W. J. Locke and others, the simple-hearted hero came to the fore. He is the youth who is eccentric in the eyes of his world because he has the heart of a child. He has the dreams and the slovenliness of childhood without its egotism. He fancies the golden rule has some connection with conduct, and outrages drawing-room decorum by naïvely practising "common sense."

Such a hero was the John Grey of "The City of Beautiful Nonsense", dandering through his early twenties with his nose to the zenith and his hands comfortably warm in empty pockets. He was not a conventionally blameless one: there was the affair with Amber, comradely enough in the main, but lapsing casually at times into a closer relation. There is a com-

mon sense of the sex relation, it seems, which our innocent John puts flatly in the later course of his sequel. He makes confession of his past relation with Amber (who loves him deeply, as anybody but a fool or a hero would see), and the priest asks him if the relationship was based on any real feeling. John says yes, he was very fond of her. Well, says the priest, then why didn't he marry her? Because, John replies, they didn't love each other, but were just very fond of each other. The priest asks him what the difference is, and John floors him completely and finally by asking him the difference between God and nature. The priest says nature is a law and God is a spirit, whereupon John says, "Well, that's the difference between being fond of a woman and being in love with her." Q. E. D. His artlessness, you gather, is not without saving touches of modernity. If (as he somewhat plaintively records in his "Author's Note" to the present volume) Mr. Thurston has been set down a sentimentalist, his sentimentalism is at least clear of the damning epithet *Victorian*

This "Author's Note" is interesting as the confession of faith of a romancer proud of his calling. "The City of Beautiful Nonsense", he surmises, succeeded because it was frankly done in "that atmosphere of romance (where) love and all the glamour of life were triumphant". A sentence that follows deserves italics. It says all that needs be said for a great body of imaginative literature: *It must be true of people in general that they love to dream a moment in a sleepless world—they need at times to get away from the insomnia of facts.* Therefore "The City of Beautiful Nonsense" was not meant to have anything to do with every-day reality. It was a fairy story (to date), "a symbol of the power of vision, the susceptibility to dreams, which carries so many with a look of youth in their eyes through to the ultimate deliverance."

Now I must own I think the story-teller was far more successful in that enterprise than in his present more difficult one. What he means here is to see what becomes of John Grey's dream when he is waked sufficiently to be aware of contact with reality; to "break his heart beneath the weight of things that happen without destroying his belief in prayer". Unluckily this breaking process is gone about in a fashion one can only call trivial. The Jill who at the end of the earlier story is swept up on John Grey's arm toward the altar that is to insure their happiness ever after, turns out to be an ordinary Jill. On close examination, she doesn't care for his poverty or his shabby-Bohemian ways and friends. That heavy British comedian her father, with his pompous patter, is easily too much for her, because she isn't the Jill we have thought her. The marriage never comes off, after all, and John is thrown back on the somewhat servile friendship of poor Amber, who is only too glad of the crumbs from the table. However, John, at least, is tolerably happy with his moral. The world, it appears, is a place not of beautiful nonsense after all, but of wonderful reality: "Only the reality not in things that happen, or in things we possess. It's in our hearts—or it's nowhere."

Is it a region of town-topical slander or a world of dismal reality that "The Sinister Revel" implicates us in? Let us postulate the latter alternative—and see how we like it. Why, let us say, among our rapidly growing series of recorded American localisms. our

studies of place and atmosphere, should not the kingdom of smart society be honestly included? What are the real standards and habits of that moneyed aristocracy which disports at Lenox and Newport and the Riviera and within the flowery termini of those canvas chutes which block our urban walks—disports always and wherever? What goes on in these guarded houses and huge closed motor cars and luxurious uncensored steam-yachts that fare at will to the world's end and back, while we ordinary citizens bore ourselves with virtue, or its appearance, at home? Give us a peep—tell us what you are sneering at—we don't doubt it a minute. It's awful, of course, but my! isn't it thrilling! . . .

Such is the attitude of democracy toward the spectacle of its pampered ones. The present chronicler seems to ignore rather than to deplore or cater to that attitude. There is little glamour in her picture of our four hundred and its multiples. She does not actionably accuse our social elect as a class. But we are free to take her portrayed family group and social set as fairly representative, to her mind of the whole. They are not pleasant to look at through her eyes; but she can only give them to us so: and so at least we may behold them without prurience if without glamour. We seem on the whole to be on a curious sort of slumming party in which drunken multimillionaires and wife-deceiving magnates take the place of the drunken navvies and wife-beating hod-carriers of a more familiar and on the whole a more comfortable realism.

The Craig Van Dam, who is the nearest thing to a hero we can find in the story, is understood to be the victim of class-circumstance. The fact is, he is a pretty feeble specimen anyhow. But he has fair aptitudes and decent enough instincts to start with. For one thing, he is boyishly in love with the nicest girl in his set, when he goes to Yale, and he means to go straight and to be something of a man for her sake. However, everybody he knows at Yale gets drunk and consorts with street girls, and Craig, with unlimited money and a father who believes in wild oats, soon "goes the pace" with and beyond the rest. A squalid "tragedy" involving the death of his first mistress necessitates his being shipped abroad for a year or two, where he loses no chance to "see life" as unlimited money may. Hereafter till the end of the story he is drunk so much of the time that we weary of hearing the fact mentioned. Why not take for granted that, unless otherwise specified, he is drunk as usual?

Craig pulls up long enough to marry his nice Constance, but a misunderstanding is easily arranged between them. She doesn't mind his getting d.a.u., but other women. . . . He is back at his own tricks, before long, and worse than ever—a malodorous name, presently, in two continents. In the end the nice wife's devotion is destined, we gather, to redeem him: but what he is good for on any terms is not clear. She had good eyes: "she saw him, in his failure, the victim of a battered idealism that had been unable to make compromise with circumstance." Love is to restore that idealism: we hope it may.

After this deboshed American, the Parisian hero of "A Woman's Man" takes on a stature of some dignity. He is not a powerful figure of a man, but on the other hand he is not the flabby inhuman egotist who forms the theme of so many recent studies

in "temperament". I have often been inclined to wish that contemporary writing men (and women) would let the writing man alone as a hero of fiction. I can't believe that a very large number of people take a burning interest in these alleged scribblers of the story-world. However, here are the books and their tolerably ready acceptance as evidence to the contrary. The heroes of "The Great Desire", "The World of Wonderful Reality", and "A Woman's Man" are all writers, and that is a fact to be kept in mind in judging of their conduct of life.

It is notable that none of them enforces the recently popular theory—the always popular theory, one may say—that an artist is a sort of inspired rowdy who gets his big results for the world by more or less going to the devil as a man. Somerset Maugham's "The Moon and Sixpence" is one of the latest and most impressive enunciations of this theory. The little hunchback of "The Great Desire" is, you may say, disqualified by nature from doing much to the ten commandments even for the sake of art; but a story-teller of the most mediocre powers (which Mr. Black is not) could persuade us to the contrary. As for the hero of "The World of Wonderful Reality", he is to be brutal, a silly ass to our knowledge and an artist only on faith. (There of course lies the main trouble with this kind of fiction: we can't hear the symphony or look upon the picture which is the only excuse for the existence of our protagonist.) John Grey is a decent young chap. He lays no further smear along the brow of genius, and with that we have said what may be said for him in this connection.

The central figure in "A Woman's Man" pays more positive testimony to the health that, more likely than not, underlies the good work of most artists. It is true that for nine-tenths of the narrative the evidence seems to be going the other way. Our young provincial gentleman who comes up to Paris to write himself into fame and falls into the hands of a mature siren, is familiar enough. We expect him to drink absinthe and fight duels and love furiously and win a sort of notoriety as a poet. Not that this sort of conduct as here chronicled is in any way dull or commonplace. This youth and this siren are not merely types but veritable persons; and not only that but true characterizations and therefore irresistible. We undoubtedly have some real person in our own house or next door, and yet our imagination quite easily resists or is unconscious of him. To get the real gist of him he has got to be "characterized" for us, set before us (by our own or another's determined fancy) in his true substance and relations...

Well, the siren, who is the corrupt wife of a born cuckold, easily persuades our poet that drinking absinthe and debauchery are his road to fame. You must "live" before you can sing to advantage. He tries the recipe for years. It entails the breach of his betrothal to the good and sweet country child who really loves him. He is weak and foolish enough; and the only reason, apparently, why we do not totally despise him is that the good and sweet Bernardette persistently does not. Presently he reacts into marriage with her, as an alterna-

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The Great Desire. By Alexander Black. Harper and Bros.
The Face of the World. By Johan Bojer. Moffat, Yard and Co.
The World of Wonderful Reality. By E. Temple Thurston. D. Appleton and Co.
The Sinister Revel. By Lillian Barrett. Alfred A. Knopf.
A Woman's Man. By Marjorie Patterson. George H. Doran Company.

tive to suicide. The siren has proved faithless once too often. Follows for our gentleman a decade of quiet life with her in the country. Two sons are born to them, and he does some really good work, wins something like solid fame as a man of letters. But the devil is not out of him and he hankers for the old wallow of his Paris life. On the brink of a new erotic experience, his wife suddenly dies; and at a stroke his eyes are opened. He sees that only she—her love and her spiritual presence beside him — has inspired all his genuine achievement from first to last. Subconsciously he has depended on her alone for all his strength; has loved her alone with all of him that mattered: "She was dead now—Bernardette was dead. The fire that had consumed her had burnt my songs out of my heart—what genius I had had, was ashes now with her."

I cannot have suggested by this brief note that extraordinary quality of the book. What a feat of dramatic fancy for the brilliant young American actress who is its author, to have projected herself into the life and being of this nineteenth century Parisian, and to have told his story through his own lips, in his own voice, and yet in singularly clean-cut English. Few recent novels have been of equally firm conception and execution; few have approached its unconstrained beauty and fitness of style.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, THE WOMAN

BY THEODOSIA GARRISON

So many lives smoulder away among the ashes of old ambitions and dreams that one is apt to look upon the fires of youth with a certain pity, —they are so beautiful and they burn out so rapidly; but to think of Ella Wheeler Wilcox is to think of a torch that, flaming valiantly from its first lighting, burned with an undiminished flame until extinguished by the sudden wind of death.

Concerning her position among the great of Parnassus much wrangling has ensued. She often said that her literary path through life was fringed by a public equally divided into rose-throwers and mud-flingers. Fortunately, hers was a nature that could brush off the mud and forget it, and carry the roses home.

To judge her by her best work is the one thing that the critic for the prosecution consistently refuses to do, and the fact that she was never goaded into frenzy by the constant reference to her youthful effusions and the ignoring of much of her mature and thoughtful work, speaks well for her philosophy.

That she was a born teacher, a reformer of the blood-royal, is obvious. Her mother told me once of a neighbor's child who, coming to play with the three-year-old Ella, was forced to submit at the hands of his infant hostess to a thorough and forceful face-scrubbing before the games began. The story was typical,—Ella Wilcox was always wanting to make the world clean before she played with

it; clean of injustice and cruelty and ignorance and narrowness and unhappiness. Whatever the final verdict as to her place among the poets, no one who ever came into contact with her vitality and determination could deny that she had a genius for living that put forty-eight hours into every day. I doubt if she ever had a dull moment in her life; and I am sure that no human mind could have been more interested in so many things at once, or could have thrown so much enthusiasm into every cause it embraced. But she could play with the world as well as wash its face. Her friends were legion, and giving them the best of herself, she never failed to pay them the subtle compliment of making them feel necessary to her happiness. Among them she was radiant and witty and dowered always with that rare gift of the gods that might be called "sympathetic interest in the trivial affairs of others". She had an appreciation of the joy of life that made her yearn to share the quality of happiness with every human being; with every dumb brute, too, one might say, seeing that she wrote and worked in the interest of every society that served or succored them.

The strangers' path to her door was made by the feet of admirers, mendicants, and dreamers of strange dreams who came to show their visions to sympathetic eyes. Everybody was welcome, nobody was ever turned away. To spend a day with Ella Wilcox at the charming home on the Connecticut shore was, in my salad days, equal to the same period of time spent at a superior and highly delightful vaudeville performance. One came from the tennis-court to meet an elderly and amiable gentleman who, having modestly announced himself as "the solver of the riddle of the universe", proceeded to prove it; one emerged from a swim to drip contentedly on the veranda steps while a young and very crimson poet, unknown before the moment of his entrance there, declaimed an ode, vainglorioously, and told the story of his life,—timidly. Dancers came and danced, musicians came and played, singers came and sang, occultists came and were occult, and the Armenian with the suitcase of linens and laces hovered always in the background. For each one Ella Wilcox had pity or advice, praise or assistance. Nobody ever helped as many lame dogs over the stile as she did, or rejoiced as heartily when they were on the right side of success. Her feeling for the young writer was maternal in its demonstration of helpfulness, — no manuscript from a stranger (and they came to her by the hundreds) that she wouldn't read and criticize for the anxious amateur who sent it. Her happiness when she found one to praise was maternal too, — quite as though a child of her own had done something worthy. But whether the manuscript was good or bad, she told the truth,—not the very goddess herself could despise deception or evasion more.

Her attitude toward her own talent was that of the recipient of some sacred responsibility. She felt herself the cupbearer of a vintage meant to hearten and refresh a thirsty world. Well, she had reason to think so, let the hypercritics sneer as they may. Her post was loaded with letters— from the pulpit and from the prison, from sad souls and mad souls, from people who had been helped, from people who wanted help, from people who looked upon her as an authority in all matters spiritual and temporal.

Some freakish letters, of course, but the majority sane and dignified, and each bearing its message of praise or gratitude.

Of her spiritual side she has written much. One need not be in sympathy with her belief to realize that she speaks from the heart of her own absolute conviction, and with the prophet's passion to share his revelation with the world.

She has been given many names by her admirers, — poet, philosopher, mystic, reformer. These may all be so, but those who were privileged to be her closest friends will remember her best as a woman with a great heart—a heart that was big enough to embrace all humanity and make its burdens and joys and triumphs and sorrows her own.

TO HENRY J. FORD

Illustrator of all Lang's Fairy Books

BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ONCE a cloaked wizard plucked a silver quill
From the drooped wings of Pegasus agraze,
Inked it in Gorgon's blood—then, to amaze
All children's hearts, wrought entrance to that hill
Where dwarves and bergtrolls guard their treasure still—
Or painted in a nacreous peacock blaze
Star-carcanetted queens, fantastic fays,
Marvelous dragons Knighthood rode to kill.

A castled land of splendid myth and story—
Witchcraft in every thicket on each stream
The rainbowed sails of argosies of dream,
Filling the firelight with their flags of glory—
Endlessly he invoked the deathless spell,
Artist and artizan of miracle!

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A SHELF OF NEW BOOKS

JURGEN

By Henry A. Lappin

WHAT the reception of this amazing chronicle will be, it is not difficult to guess. On the centre table of the second aisle to the left, main floor, Cabell will never elbow, much less oust, a post-bellum Wells or Locke, even a Cosmopolitanized Galsworthy. Though he has successively puzzled, irritated, and embittered those ephemeridæ, "the critics", it is not, however, absurdly inconceivable that some future historian of American lettters —if Jurgen's creator incur a classification at those blameless hands— may, from his olympian perspective and from the profound of his academic sobriety, austerely affirm Cabell an incumbent of the well-known ivory tower. At this writing the great placid public remains singularly unmoved. To that multitude his heroic detachment, his frozen impartiality, are caviar. The solemnity of the enigma that lurks within the bosom of every man is none of their affair; for them the grave absorption of the interrogative gaze with which he confronts life is simply void of significance. But by the neglect and blame that have almost continuously been lavished upon him, he remains as uninfluenced as by the two or three lonely if liberal recognitions that so far constitute his exiguous guerdon of praise.

"Jurgen" is at once the odyssey of a delicate and impassioned spirit, an exploration of the sinister by-streets of our mortal adventure, a mythological fantasia, and a faithful, discerning biography. "In the instability of his emotions", the author of "Nostromo" once wrote, "man resembles deplorably a monkey." Unstable as water, Jurgen excels not. With an irony impenetrable in its sombre urbanity, this curious and subtle student of the human spirit makes us see to the very quick, in its radiant richness no less than in its irremediable poverty and shiftiness, the soul of his Jurgen, that philosophic doubter and tragi-comic poet who sought he knew not what. Never once does this artist stultify the reader with an obvious moral. He refrains from explanation or defense, and neither preaches nor praises. Only he displays.

From that dun moment of disaster wherein, having traversed the Heath of Amneran and achieved the desolate places of Morven in quest of his bewrayed Dame Lisa, he cast from him the cross of Christ and entered the dark cave where sojourned the Centaur, polishing his hooves against the time of Jurgen's coming, down to the same grim Walburga's Eve in which, having made hasty exit from Heaven, he found himself again on the Heath, and so went to the final epic tryst of revelation with Koschei the Deathless, —Jurgen saw much and endured more. In the Garden Between Dawn and Sunrise he looked upon a Dorothy Who Did not Understand and found a Jurgen that once had been and now no longer was: he rescued Guenevere and lancinated adroitly the pitiful disguises of Thragnar: and as Duke of Logreus—O frailest flesh!—undid Yo-

lande: and as grandson of King Smoit lent himself to the ghostly deviltry of that unamiable autocrat and his imperturbable leading lady, Sylvia Tereu: and, in his own proper person, gazed upon the ineffable dark abominations unfolded to his terrified seeing by the Brown Man with Queer Feet: voyaged briskly with Anaitis to the unholy land of Cocaigne and slept under the troubling star of Venus Machanitis: bade farewell to Chloris the comely: sat cheek by jowl with Father Satan and had commerce with the Lovely Vampire.

All these things and many many more did he see and endure and live to remember, and in the end, splendid in disillusionment, he came back to the supper and the Candid Opinions prepared for him by Lisa, to whom at the last his lessoned heart was fain to turn. For he had been taught how "it is the fashion of women to discard civility toward those for whom they suffer most willingly; and whom a woman loveth she chasteneth . . ." And had he not learned this also, that though we poets may write a deal about love, "none of us may grasp the world's full meaning until he reflects that this is a passion mighty enough to induce a woman to put up with him"?

Some readers may rather balk the pathological psychology of certain of this mediæval picaro's deeds and moods, and there may well be those whose blood the leprous occultism of Cocaigne has ready art to freeze. (Nor are all Jurgen's myriad improprieties unqualifiedly serene.) In the exotic, the abnormal, the hideous, Mr. Cabell's lore is as much a reality as Huysmans's was in the mystic, symbolic, and necromantic: but none will therefore venture to dub him decadent. Indeed the total effect of the book is both enkindling and exalting. Into the present reviewer's memory, as he read "Jurgen", Anatole France's "L'Ile des Pingouins" returned more than twice or thrice. And perhaps it is not altogether his idiosyncrasy that seems to detect, at times, in the distinguished and magnanimous pages of this Virginian, an echo, however tremulous and faint, of that note of Latin and Catholic pessimism which, as dear Tom Kettle declared aforetime, "is so indispensable a propædeutic to any valorous religion".

Jurgen. By James Branch Cabell. Robert M. McBride and Co.

THE EVOLUTIONIST AS CRITIC

By Helen Bullis Kizer

CONCERNING a certain prime and fundamental quality of poetry, Mr. Lowes quotes Keats's dictum that it "should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost as a remembrance." If the same test apply also to criticism—and I do not see why it should not,—Mr. Lowes's book will sustain it admirably. Over and over again, the reader finds its phrases so apt, its judgments so sane and inevitable, that in very defense of his own intelligence he feels that they must long have lain *perdus* in it, and that the printed page to which they have mysteriously escaped belongs as much to him as to the actual author.

This significant phenomenon springs from the fact that the method employed in "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" is a strictly scientific one. As Darwin slowly and painstakingly built up the theory of the origin of species out of numberless apparently

isolated facts, so Mr. Lowes has brought together a cloud of witnesses, from Chaucer to the latest insurgent, to prove that poetry progresses according to the laws of evolution; that it is a tree striking roots deep into the human need to express the beauty and mystery of the natural world, the memory and longing of man's soul; growing by means alike of convention and revolt, rejecting from earth or air or shower no particle of its appointed food.

Not a new theory, to be sure. But "originality, rightly understood". Mr. Lowes tells us, "seldom concerns itself with minting a new and particular medium of its own. . . . (Its) supreme test is its power to give us the sense of a footing on trodden and familiar ground, which all at once is recognized as unexplored". And the freshness of temper and style which Mr. Lowes has brought to his task has rescued the old academic truism from its desuetude as triumphantly as Geoffrey Chaucer rescued poetry from the life-in-death of the mediæval *roman*.

In these days when the literary world is divided into hostile camps flying the flag of the "new" and the "old" poetry, Mr. Lowes may have the epithet "Laodicean" hurled at him from both sides. For while he delights the conservative by holding that the "exercise of creative energy upon dead forms and empty shells" is a high form of originality, and proves his case, he admits that poetry also gains through outright revolt; that even the extremest "isms", when they "have enjoyed their nine days' wonder, and been gathered to their fathers", leave a certain fertilizing residuum by which art grows. But though, to the poets militant, he may savor of lukewarmness, they cannot afford to spew him from scornful mouths. No previous American critic, nor English critic whom I can think of, has brought to the discussion of current literary tendencies such an equipment of remembered reading, so keen and lively a wit, so clear a discernment of issues. By avoiding the ranks of the adversaries, he becomes a most formidable adversary—formidable, that is to those men and movements that will not endure the test of the historical method. Neither those "poets of low vitality (who) ensconce themselves like hermit-crabs, generation after generation, in the cast-off shells of their predecessors", nor those who are so avid of "immediacy of expression" that they "shed impressions as a cat sheds hairs", will find stay or comfort in "Convention and Revolt in Poetry". The fact that the historical method understands all and forgives all, will not reconcile to it either the bourbon-minded conservatives who feel that whatever is, is bound to continue indefinitely right, or the bourbon-minded radicals who are convinced that whatever is, is eternally wrong. Who among them wants to be understood? Who, above all, wants to be forgiven?

Not that Mr. Lowes assumes any superior, Olympian attitude toward poetry or poets. He simply sets forth the fact that revolt is constantly settling into convention, as tadpoles shed their tails and become frogs; while convention, matured, constantly begets revolt, as frogs, tadpoles. Argument as to priority or relative importance becomes as inutile as the old debate, which comes first—the chicken or the egg.

Of course, there is much in "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" aside

from its main thesis of systole and diastole in art. A discussion of what actually constitutes the difference between prose and poetry fills one of the most interesting chapters, though not one of the most convincing. For this is a field in which the historical method makes a fine show of action, like a horse on a race-track, only to come back to its starting-point—the many minds of many men, and their opinions, uncertain and fluctuating as wind-blown flame, as to what poetry is in its essence, and what prose. Mr. Lowes admits that there is a wide borderland between the two—"for centuries the No Man's Land of literature, claimed now by one side, now by the other, and securely held by neither"—; and he strives to find a clue which shall lead him safely out of the barbed-wire entanglements on every hand. It must be confessed that he emerges from the chapter with fewer scratches than might have been anticipated, largely because he throws away at the start certain impedimenta of the older criticism for which barbed-wire has a particular affinity. He concedes at once that vers libre—good vers libre—is poetry. Also much of Meredithian and Conradian and Paterian prose is excellen free verse. Here one's mind begins to hark back to forgotten tags—"things which are equal to the same thing . . . "—but they turn out not to be quite the same thing after all. The rhythms of prose, however "poetical" they may be, are not maintained consistently, its "strophic element" is not uniform.

> Free verse . . . deals with prose rhythms in a fashion which prose itself may not employ without ceasing to be prose. . . . It is doing certain things which hitherto verse has done, and prose has not. It is doing certain other things which hitherto prose has done, and verse has not. It has simply staked out its claim in No Man's Land, and that is not a region mild, of calm and serene air. On the contrary, it is open to fire from two sides at once, and both sides are practising their marksmanship. If free verse holds its ground (and from what I know of the versifiers I have a strong suspicion that it will), there will be at least an armistice by and by to consider terms.

One great service Mr. Lowes has performed no less to poetry in general than to the "new" poetry in particular, in his separation of its insurgent sheep from goats. He treats the Imagists with respect, though he points out to them the danger that "as individuality approaches singularity, it retreats from its lines of communication and isolates itself" to its undoing. He quotes the work of Amy Lowell, "H.D.", and John Gould Fletcher with evident pleasure. So far from retreating within an Ivory Tower, he says:

> For myself, I confess to unfeigned delight in the insurgent propaganda. Its fine ardor and alacrity of spirit, its enthusiasm for ideals, its eager hospitality to all poetic Ishmaelites, self-exiled from Abraham's bosom, are metal more attractive than a complacent and impeccably correct inertia. And militant poetry is more to edification than poetic or any other pacifism.

But the passing comment, following a quotation, "—says Mr. Ezra Pound, who was once a poet", and the stab at the facile sentimentalist,—

> Let nature drop in a sunset, or life a heart-throb, there is a little click, and a poem drops soft and warm into your outstretched hand,—

—show the very little patience of the author with whatever he conceives to have less than artistic sincerity and conscience behind it.

Not the least pleasant thing about "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" is the author's modest and gently humorous view of his own functions as literary critic. He realizes that the fact that he *is* a critic, and above all, a critic who holds a chair in a

great university, is bound to prejudice him in the eyes of the proud young radicals who would make the world over new every morning, and that an attempt to hold the scales even-balanced is hazardous:

> I realize my danger. A critic, who is at the same time friendly to the new and not blind to the defects of its virtues, is always in a parlous state. He can only ask that his intentions be taken as honorable, and pursue his way between the devil and the deep sea, where balance perilously resides, with such cheerfulness and resolution as he can muster.

Much more of resolution, it may be said, and much less of cheerfulness, go to the leaving of Mr. Lowes's book than to the taking of it up. Which is quite as it should be, but rarely is.

Convention and Revolt in Poetry. By John Livingston Lowes. Houghton Mifflin Co.

PROFESSOR JOHN C. VAN DYKE'S NEW BOOK

By Henry McBride

IN the chapter upon John La Farge in Professor John C. Van Dyke's new book, "American Painting and its Tradition", the author appears to define his personal rôle as critic. La Farge, who detested art criticism, had declared that he had read thousands of pages of it "without finding anything that a person seriously devoted to his profession of art could find of the slightest use"; and Professor Van Dyke mildly ventured in return that "aid to artists was not the object of art criticism, that an attempt to instruct professionals would argue greater knowledge in the critic than in the artist and be presumptuous, that the critic wrote for the public and thought to be of service by calling attention to and explaining certain things that might otherwise be overlooked or misjudged."

If modesty be commendable in writers and artists, then certainly Professor Van Dyke may be commended. The note of pacification so easily detected in the passage quoted runs through all his pages. Professor Van Dyke even refused to quarrel with Whistler; and when that Apostle of Free Speech spent an entire London evening "slamming" critics, our author opined, as he was being put out of the house by Whistler and Pennell, that "art critics were not very different from other people, that they did the best they could, but were human and often erred". The naughty Butterfly could think of nothing more wilful than the academic retort: "Oh, my dear Van Dyke, don't misunderstand. We none of us think of you as an art critic." "Everybody laughed", adds honest Professor Van Dyke, who consoled himself with the reflection, as he went out into the black night, that "there was not a particle of venom" in the remark, and that really Whistler was very good-natured. However, he was quite right not to have quarreled with Whistler.

This complaisance toward artists is extended to public opinion and the passing fashion as well. If the public insists that it is a whale, Professor Van Dyke agrees readily enough that it is "very like a whale". Of the critic as artist, or the critic as a constructive agent, he has scarcely a notion. That would be too "presumptuous". So the list of artists whom he considers is the list that trade has crowned with its dubious *réclame;* and although he is evasive in ranking them, upon the whole it may be seen that he agrees with the valuations of the auction room. The

order in which his artists appear is this: George Inness, Alexander H. Wyant, Homer Martin, Winslow Homer, John La Farge, Whistler, William M. Chase, J. W. Alexander, and Sargent; and the first three and La Farge arouse his enthusiasm most. In the essay upon Chase he says:

> A distribution and pigeonholing of our nine American painters as regards aim and tendency would perhaps place Inness, Wyant, and Martin among the most intelligent and sympathetic of the earlier men; Homer, La Farge, and Whistler the most detached and self-sufficient of the middle men, and Chase, Alexander and Sargent the most facile and best trained of the younger men.

As Professor Van Dyke conforms so closely to the rulings of the picture mart, he ought, if there be such a thing as gratitude in business circles, to have some authority there. So on one subject at least—that of Mr. La Farge's art—he will assist his friends very much, for there he has the luck to be in advance of them. Curiously enough, La Farge has scarcely any rating whatever upon the stock-market, in spite of the considerable figure he cut during life; and as his greatest windows and his finest decorations are not likely to come soon to the auction-block, a public that judges works of art by their prices is apt to drift to wrong conclusions. Professor Van Dyke is really calling attention to something "that might otherwise be overlooked" in his admirable plea for La Farge. Upon the topic "Winslow Homer", he is not so admirable. The strength of this greatest of American painters is quite lost upon our author: "He came too early for perfect expression," "He must have known his expression was incomplete," "At sixty, Homer had no more than found his theme. It would have taken another lifetime to have given him style and method," etc. To err in trifles is forgivable, but a critic is judged by the manner in which he approaches great themes. To have failed so completely upon "Winslow Homer" is Professor Van Dyke's tragedy.

The "Art Tradition in America" has been given a chapter to itself, and the conclusion is reached that—it doesn't exist. Professor Van Dyke is not too downhearted about it, as he knows that tradition in the end is unescapable, that "there were several hundred years of sculptors in Greece, with a continuous story, before Scopas and Praxiteles brought their art to final maturity", and that when the like period of years shall have rolled over our luckless youthful heads we shall have learned how to be American in art. The only spectre in his mind is the doubt whether we can exist long enough as a state to come to fruition. The rock of cosmopolitanism looms directly in our path, and if we break ourselves upon it to become merely one of the little parishes of the world—then good-bye to all dreams of an American Praxiteles.

And in the meantime he completely forgets Winslow Homer.

American Painting and its Tradition. By John C. Van Dyke. Charles Scribner's Sons.

OLD COLONIAL DOORWAYS

By Walter A. Dyer

ONE cannot collect old doorways as one collects old furniture and china, but one can collect photographs of them. It isn't the same thing as owning them, of course, but in such a pictorial collection there resides something of that opportunity for analysis, classification, study, and loving admiration which in a measure explains the charm of collecting. It

should prove invaluable, moreover, to architects and to builders or remodelers of homes.

It is a collection of this sort that Albert G. Robinson has made in his book "Old New England Doorways", and judging from his introductory remarks, he got a good bit of fun out of the quest. Some three score of his photographs of old New England doorways have been published in a handsomely printed book. They were gathered in Portsmouth, Salem, and in various smaller towns and villages in New England, and represent chiefly eighteenth-century work.

Many of the houses of that day were plain, practical affairs, the doorway furnishing the one emphatic note of ornamental interest, the outstanding architectural feature. In those days professional architects were few, the doorways being designed and built largely by amateurs actuated by a remarkable spirit of craftsmanship and often gifted with a highly developed sense of proportion and design. Consequently a wide variety of treatment is to be observed in their work, though it most frequently harks back to the classic for its inspiration, or to the English Georgian revival of the classic; and the collector-student will find it possible to group these old doorways into classes and types. Mr. Robinson's pictures include doorways with the straight cornice, the arched or elliptical top, the plain gable, and the swan's-neck or broken-arch pediment, with various forms of pilasters and with or without fanlights and sidelights. There are also recessed and porch entrances. The author says:

> While other shapes [of pediment] are not unusual, the more common form is pyramidal, a small gable with pilasters on the house wall and columns at its outer end. The columns vary in design; round, square, fluted, with plain and with decorated capitals, with and without pedestals. In both the gable and the other designs there is wide variety. The flat entablature runs all the way from the severely plain to the elaborate, with dentils and carved frieze. In the gable, or pyramidal type, the inner line or ceiling may follow the slope of the outer line, or it may be arched. Not infrequently it is flat, the face of the pediment showing the conventional "tympanum".

Mr. Robinson's text is all too brief and though readable, it leaves one desirous of more information. It would be well, perhaps, to study his admirable photographs in connection with such works as "Colonial Architecture for Those about to Build" by Herbert C. Wise and H. Ferdinand Beidleman, "Reclaiming the Old House" by Charles Edward Hooper, or something even more technical. Mr. Hooper offers an illuminating passage on this topic:

> In the early forms, it [the New England doorway] was solid, without toplight or side lights, making a dark hall. Then the upper horizontal panel was altered to receive bull's-eye lights, which were later added to the transom. These gave way to the simple toplight, which, gradually elaborated with wooden muntins, finally blossomed forth into leaded glass. With its first elaboration came the sidelight and these in combination effected sufficient lighting area, even for a considerable hall.
>
> While the first door trim was absolutely flat—a plain enclosing member like the window casing—it shortly took on a cap and back moldings and, later pilasters. In certain sections the pilaster developed into a three-quarter-round column and the next step was the isolated column and the open porch, while in rare instances a hood was supported on brackets. Shortly after 1800 the enclosed pre-Georgian porch came back again, minus its second story.

But Mr. Robinson modestly disclaims any intention of imparting technical information. He simply points the way to a delightful quest. And for those who need a definite object when they fare forth on foot or by motor, "for to admire an' for to see", for those whose natures react pleasurably to the sight of ancient houses with hospitable doorways whose exquisite proportions and un-

ending variety are a source of enjoyment to the artistic eye, Mr. Robinson's photographs offer a stimulus which, as the toastmaster says, needs no introduction.

Old New England Doorways. By Albert G. Robinson. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"IT IS OF LINDA"

By James Brach Cabell

TO make a clean breast of it, Mr. Hergesheimer's latest novel, "Linda Condon", is to be valued less as the life-history of a woman than as the depiction—curt, incisive, and yet pitying—of a shrine which, however transiently, was hallowed. At the exacting workaday pursuit of being a human being, this Linda fails, fails chilled and wistful. For she has, like more of us than dare proclaim the defect, no talent whatever for heartfelt living, so that most persons seem but to pass grayly upon the horizon of her consciousness, like unintelligible wraiths gesticulating,—and always remaining, somehow, disjunct and not gravely important,—the while that all the needs and obligations of one's corporal life must be discharged with an ever-present sense of their queer triviality. And toward nobody, neither toward Linda Condon's mother nor lover nor husband nor children, may she, the real Linda, quite entertain any sense of actual attachment, far less of intimacy. . . .

Meanwhile she has her loveliness, not of character or mind, but a loan of surpassing physical beauty. And to Linda Condon her own bright, moving carcass becomes a thing to be tended and preserved religiously, because beauty is divine, and she herself is estimable, if at all, as the fane which beauty briefly inhabits. . . . And by and by, under time's handling, her comeliness is shriveled, and her lovers are turned to valueless dust: but first, has Linda's lost young beauty been the buried sculptor's inspiration, and it has been perpetuated in everlasting bronze. The perfection of Linda Condon's youth is never to perish, and is not ever to be dulled by old age or corrupted in death. She comprehends this as she passes out of the story, a faded, desolate and insignificant bit of rubbish, contented to know that the one thing which really meant much to her is, as if by a miracle, preserved inviolate. . . .

Beauty is divine; a power superior and even elfinly inimical to all human moralities and rules of thumb, and a divinity which must unflinchingly be served: that, in this book as always, is Mr. Hergesheimer's text. For this is the divinity which he, too, serves unflinchingly, and with consummate evocations, in striving to write perfectly of beautiful happenings.

It is an ideal here approached even more nobly than in the preceding Hergesheimer books. Nowhere has Joseph Hergesheimer found an arena more nicely suited to the exercise of his most exquisite powers than in this modern tale of *domnei*—of the worship of woman's beauty as, upon the whole, Heaven's finest sample of artistic self-expression, and as, in consequence, the most adequate revelation of God; and as such a symbol, therefore, a thing to be revered above all else that visibly exists, even by its temporary possessor. That last is Mr. Hergesheimer's especial refinement upon a tenet sufficiently venerable to have been nodded over by Troy's gray-bearded councilors when Helen's skirts were rustling by,—and a refinement, too, which would have been re-

pudiated by Helen herself, who, as you may remember, was inclined less elevatedly to regard her own personal appearance as a disaster-provoking nuisance.

Well, and to Linda Condon, also, was beauty a nuisance—"a bitter and luxurious god", that implacably required to be honored with sacrifices of common joys and ties and ruddy interests, but was none the less divine. Sustained by this sole knowledge, she passes out of the story, when youth is over, regarding not very seriously that which is human and ephemeral, even as embodied in her lovers and her children, nor in herself, but rather always turning grave blue eyes toward that which is divine; passes, at once the abandoned sanctuary, the priestess, the postulant and the martyr of that beauty to which fools had once referred as "hers"; passes not as the wreckage of a toy but as an outworn instrument which has helped to further the proud labor of a god; and passes, as all must pass, without any sure comprehension of achievement, but with content. That, really, is "The Happy End."

Linda Condon. By Joseph Hergesheimer. Alfred A. Knopf.

A NEW ENGLISH POET

By John Bunker

SEVERAL years ago the present reviewer read in an English magazine, with pleasure to his mind and profit to his soul, a poem entitled "The World's Miser". It was signed "Theodore Maynard" and later was the subject of eulogistic comment by one G. K. Chesterton, who it seems is an English critic of weight. We needed no external witness to its excellence, however, and thought the poem fine on our own account. The opening lines ran as follows:

A Miser with an eager face
Sees that each roseleaf is in place.

He keeps beneath strong bolts and bars
The piercing beauty of the stars.

The colours of the dying day
He hoards as treasure—well He may!—

And saves with care (lest they be lost)
The dainty diagrams of frost.

And the piece concluded:

He fixes on each wayside stone
A mark to shew it as His Own.

And knows when raindrops fall through air
Whether each single one be there.

That gathered into ponds and brooks
They may become His picture-books.

To shew in every spot and place
The living glory of His face.

Well, of course when a man writes like that it is a fair presumption that he is a poet; and everything that we have since seen of Mr. Maynard's has amply confirmed our original judgment. It was with real pleasure therefore, that we took up the present collection of "Poems", for which as his first American appearance the author has made a thorough winnowing of his previous volumes of English publication—"Laughs and Whifts of Song" "Drums of Defeat" and "Folly". . . .

One of the things we like about Mr. Maynard is that he is not hysterical about himself or the universe, with the result that one gets from him a sense of ease and quiet mastery and a certain high quality of serenity which is in the best tradition of his art. There is in his work a welcome absence of that feminine, or—which is a far different thing—rather that effeminate note which especially before the war seemed to characterize most of our singers and made the average healthy male at sight of a

book of verse want to go off somewhere and die. (Probably feminine readers felt the same way. As to that we can't say.) Nor does he suffer from spiritual dyspepsia, hymning as so many of our modern writers do his petty aches and trivial discomforts. He is tender without sentimentality and religious without being pietistic, and the verse he writes is the product of a vigorous and masculine intelligence. And all this for the simple reason that he holds that rare and much misunderstood thing—a mystical philosophy. Whence come his sanity and simplicity and directness and childlike sense of wonder and laughter and love of mirth and other most excellent and delectable qualities?

There is, too, much variety in his book—nature poems, religious poems, rollicking drinking-songs (alas, poor Yorick!), love poems, descriptive pieces, elegies, humorous skits, poems of a noble patriotism, and those reveries, into which all men fall, that have no name. And as for imagination and style and rhythm and cadence and phrasing and the other peculiar marks of the poet's craft—well, there also, as we have tried to intimate, Mr. Maynard stands the test—from the simplicity of,—

Three fragile, sacramental things
  Endure, though all your pomps shall pass—
A butterfly's immortal wings,
  A daisy and a blade of grass,—

through the two massive sonnets to "England", down to the lines to the noisy boy, whom the poet in spite of his "murdered verse" bids,—

Whistle the Marseillaise, and ring the bell,
And chase the cat, and lose your tennis-ball,
And tear your trousers on the garden-wall,
Scalp a Red Indian, sail the Spanish seas,—
Do any mortal thing you damn well please.

There is plenty of good laughter in the book and poems in praise of laughter, but there are also those which strike a more solemn note. In these poems of sorrow, however, there is nothing querulous, nothing of whining complaint, since the poet has too profound a faith in ultimate goodness and realizes that, after all, sorrow is only noble when it is nobly borne.

Poems. By Theodore Maynard. With an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

THE DELIGHTS OF "PORCHING"

By Dorothy Lawrance Mann

SOMETIMES in the whirl of modern activities, modern democracy, struggles, strikes, and the like, we need cool, green oases of differentness. We need to remember that there was such a thing as the fine old aristocracy of leisure. The Chinese know it and they had centuries of it behind them when America was discovered. When one of them wants to recommend himself, he describes himself as a person of unlimited leisure. Most writers of our hectic present believe that they can make their heroes and heroines attractive only by describing them as ceaselessly active, impelled like Dante's Paolo and Francesca by an imperative interior urge, forever and ever moving. It does not so much matter what they are doing, so long as they are never discovered at rest. That is a major crime.

If it were not for a few casual mentionings of the "thickly, highly, and densely populated island where she spends her winters", we should scarcely realize that Dorothy Scarborough lives in our modern America. Day after day, week after week, her wanderings are confined to the front

porch, the side porch, the kitchen porch, and the sleeping porch. Moreover, they are limited by volition and not by physical necessity. It is little wonder that she surprises us by the strangeness of her ideals. How many today would openly devote pages to an appreciation of what she calls frankly "loafing"? Or who would dare admit a keen pleasure in his own companionship? She resurrects something of the atmosphere of that old South where the white man was born to the privilege of being waited upon. In the North equal service may be enjoyed, but it is pretty sure to be the base-born son of a well-filled and easily-opened pocketbook.

Since the professors have suggested that atmosphere is a quantity which may be brought into existence according to rule, the term has got into disrepute; yet the term cannot well be abandoned in the case of Miss Scarborough's book. A certain amount of experience either real or vicariously acquired is an asset; but to the majority the mere mention of New York or Boston, or Virginia, instantly brings up a detailed picture—though the picture may differ somewhat widely from the original. The professor of the book, for instance, is a nice person, obviously appealing to the author, and arrayed in all the earmarks of the fictional Bostonian. He belongs quite clearly to that Boston which we recognize as a state of some author's minds. With less reason I am inclined to judge the Texan as being of similar antecedents. They emphasize what appears to be the true-to-experience quality of Virginia. Others have borrowed her houses with their broad, gracious porches and pillars rising two stories. Others have endeavored to imitate the richness and variety of Virginia's flowers, though most of those mentioned in this book are indigenous to New England as well as Virginia. The North has imported thousands of black men and women, but with it all we know that there remains a something we recognize as Virginia, which refuses to be lured north of the Mason and Dixon line.

It is this insoluble Virginia which calls to us from the pages of Dorothy Scarborough's book. It is compounded of enumerable small things rather than of any one big element. Moreover, since the entire book goes to make up the total effect, each reader may choose for himself what makes him actively feel Virginia. It may be the songs of the blacks working—not too hard!—in the fields; or Tishie finishing the ironing in the open air by the aid of a charcoal burner; the lizards darting across the porch; the flash of the cardinal bird; Lucia and her summer-long visit; or the continual stream of life which flows leisurely along the road and stops in (whether black or white) to add each his or her quota to the day's news and entertainment.

With the somewhat rusty ideal of aristocratic leisure, the essays are couched in terms of a rather delicate whimsicality. We appreciate the whimsical in American letters because it is our nearest approach to the subtlety attributed to old civilization. It embodies the delightfully intimate laugh between the author and the reader, a laugh that implies a common superiority of intellect. One instinctively envies the whimsical writer his cleverness. Almost anyone can be cynical but only a few possess the whimsical insight, that kind of maternal understanding which proclaims, "Isn't my world and aren't my little people adorably funny?"

Dorothy Scarborough frankly para-

phrases Sam Walter Foss as she sits by the side of the Virginia road and watches the stream of life pass by, only we must understand that humans are but a small part of her world. She counts toads as her friends. Snakes she finds delightful companions—though one does not touch them—and lizards are unrivaled. Her pleasure in mocking-birds is more easily understood.

She is a naïve epicurean in her fondness for southern cooking. Her confessed interest may prove a little shocking to some, since a literary indifference to food is a characteristic trait of American literature. Perhaps the passing of the cocktail will mean that authors will be obliged to give more study to the art of eating. It is in this field, we are told, that negro melodies outdo the white man's—since the negro frankly sings of what interests him. Miss Scarborough has none of this sort of self-consciousness to forget. She follows the footsteps of older English writers in setting her table often and setting it well. She is just as honest over the joys of sleeping well—sleeping in the open air with the trees whispering to you, the birds to wake you, and Thomas Jefferson Randolph to tiptoe upstairs with a breakfast of strawberries and cream, a nice plump egg on a piece of toast, batter-bread piping hot with butter on it, crisp frizzled bacon to eat with it, and coffee from a tiny blue pot.

Though the book is not a novel, it pays tribute to the hoary tradition of the necessary love story. It is a little humorous that the same author who consigns the "glad child" to the limbo of the never-have-existed should give us Lucia with her excessively moral story, in which the cruel doctor who killed the toad loses the girl and she is won by the professor who never had been loved in his boyhood. However, Lucia occupies very small space in the book. It is the delights of "porching" with which the author is chiefly concerned, and one of the large delights seems to be that it restores joy in the simpler pleasures of existence: sleeping, eating, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and mingling with one's fellow humans. In the densely populated island of her winters one may pass thousands every day without giving them a thought, but in Virginia it is difficult for one of the stream of humanity wending its way along the road to escape leaving an impression with the "porcher".

From a Southern Porch. By Dorothy Scarborough. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

FREE VERSE AND CERTAIN STRICTURES

By Babette Deutsch

THE ancient controversy between the vers librist and the classicist still rages in Dr. Andrews's volume on "The Writing and Reading of Verse". The very fact that the greater part of the book is devoted to the principles of classical verse and the technique of classical verse forms, points to the author's bias. To the student of technique all this is undeniably interesting, however familiar. But the two chapters which deal with that hazy middle ground between poetry and prose are the most engaging, largely because they stimulate a renewal of the old battle of the books.

Dr. Andrews distinguishes between two kinds of vers libre—that represented by Matthew Arnold's "Philo-

mela", and that typified by Whitman's "Leaves of Grass". The first, developing from the English Pindaric ode and the imitated choruses of the Greek dramatists, is free from a fixed metrical norm and may also be free from rhyme. But despite the irregularity of the stanzaic structure, a definite rhythmical pattern is manifest. The second type of free verse, however, is free both from a fixed meter and from a definite rhythmical pattern. The result is something closely allied to rhythmical prose. The kinship with fixed verse in the Arnold type lends it the same kind of charm: its beauty lies in "the struggle between the phrasing and the underlying established rhythm", whereas the Whitman type depends for its significance upon changes in the rhythm itself. This distinction is an interesting one, and true as far as it goes. But it is, after all, a half truth only. Dr. Andrews makes frequent allusions to the polemics of John Gould Fletcher and Amy Lowell, but he nowhere answers their legitimate claims for vers libre.

Were it not that the book is so lacking in this regard, one would hesitate before the redundancy of further argument. But the author has drawn the fire and iron down on his own head. Briefly, the difference between a passage of rhythmical prose (the solemn cadences of "Urn Burial" or some portrait of the sea by Conrad) and a poem in free verse, is not so much a matter of harmonics as of architechtonics. Santayana's statement that poetry is a kind of hybrid between algebra and music throws light on this distinction. For prose, however rhythmical, is algebraic in its intention. Its structure has the simplicity of logic, the severity of mathematics. Poetry, and this is especially true of free verse, where the function of rhythm is unique, has more the quality of music. Its resurgent waves move with the broad sweep of a sonata, the recurrence and culmination of a symphony. It has what one might call a spiral structure. That this is not mere arbitrary symbolism may be seen by careful study of some of the best examples of free verse.

These Dr. Andrews serenely disregards. His citations are mainly from Milton, Tennyson, and Swinburne. Certainly there is no lack of memorable and striking passages here. But that the excellences of English poetic literature died with the nineteenth century is open to controversy. One cannot resist moving to take arms against this covert sentiment. It is the author's contention, for example, that,—

> . . . imitative and suggestive rhythms actually occur more frequently in the fixed verse forms of Tennyson than in any of the modern vers librists. The reason for this lies not only in the greater genius of Tennyson, but in the fact that rhythmic changes are more prominent when they are felt as departures from an expected basic rhythm. For example, the rhythm of,—
>
> | First as in|fear,|step after|step, she |stole
> | Down the long|tower|stairs|hesita-|ting,—
>
> is suggestively wavering because the lines are phrased to bring out departures from the expected iambic form of the blank verse context. . . . The lesson which the vers librist may learn from this is to make two or three lines in an even rhythm directly precede a line whose suggestive irregularity he wishes to make conspicuous.

The vers librist may learn this, of course, but he may learn a more difficult and, I think, a finer art from "The Return" by Ezra Pound. It is quite free from a fixed meter, and I doubt if it could be compared with the Arnold type of free verse, in spite of its recurrent dactyls. But it fol-

lows a path of beauty unknown to the feet of the hesitat*ing* Elaine:

> See, they return; ah see the tentative
> Movements, and the slow feet,
> The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
> Wavering!

The statement that free verse does not force the poet to contemplate his thought with an intensity which brings out its fullest possibilities is of course false. One may appreciate all the difficulties of writing poetry whose basic pattern is rhythmic rather than metrical, but such difficulties are all the more binding upon the poet; and in the case of the imagists at least, succinctness and intensity are cardinal laws. What Dr. Andrews seems to fear is the lack of principles governing the writing of free verse. Yet he repeats throughout the book that "poets must write by ear, not by rule". It is the latter axiom that is rather to be remembered; and the worth of his study lies in the fact that it helps one to train the ear to appreciate subtler values. The author has the scholar's scrupulous allusiveness, and it is the more regrettable that he nowhere takes note of Miss Crapsey's contribution to the subject in her study in "English Metrics".

This slight but noteworthy volume presents the following thesis:

> That no prosodic theory is adequate which fails explicitly to recognize within verse-structure as a whole a complex of three interexistent structures: 1. the verse-form proper, itself two-fold, consisting of (a) the rhythmic arrangement and (b) the syllabic arrangements by means of which the rhythm is exteriorized; and 2. the sub-structural phonetic speech-arrangement . . . attention in the present discussion is sharply focused on the word, which I would contend, is in its phonetic aspect the basic structural unit of language physically considered, as the foot is the basic structural unit of the verse-form proper.

Miss Crapsey goes on to examine phonetic word-structure, as an important application of phonetics to metrical problems. It is illustrative of her method as well as of her theory to state that she finds it impossible to make any direct technical comparison between Swinburne and Milton, because of the different structural condition in their vocabularies. Swinburne uses a vocabulary either monodissyllabic or with a low occurrence of polysyllables, in triple rhythm; Milton uses a vocabulary of extreme structural complexity in duple. "Between Milton and Swinburne there would then be this tremendously significant difference, that one stands at the end of a long sequence in development, the other at the beginning of a sequence." It follows that we have an entirely new basis of formulating judgments—a basis which Dr. Andrews may implicitly appreciate, but which he nowhere explicitly discusses. And while Miss Crapsey was only at the beginning of her interesting experiment when death shut the book, she was able at least to point the way to fresh and inviting fields.

To a degree it is unfair to quarrel with what purports, after all, to be a primary text-book on metrics, for omitting more technical discussions. But while Dr. Andrews should be commended for giving the student a convenient and fairly adequate introduction to the study, it is unfortunate that his bias in favor of classicism should blind him to the extremely interesting and important contributions of the younger school. Especially for the student, a rigid adherence to familiar forms, and a disregard for contemporary experiment, is a cruel, if not a dangerous procedure. Poetry, like a jest, lies largely in the ear that hears it, and, except for its natural

lovers, only scholarly scrutiny and the spur of covert beauty can reveal its finer values.

The Writing and Reading of Verse. By C E. Andrews. D. Appleton and Co.

HOW TO TELL PEOPLE ONE FROM ANOTHER

By H. I. Brock

Among the experiments which were so characteristic of our conduct of a war now so happily ended, was that of employing a professor of psychology to organize and direct the machinery which was to choose our fighting flyers. Elaborate tests ingeniously devised by a rival psychologist were subsequently employed as an aid toward the selection of men for promotion or special assignment. It was said by officers upon whom the ungrateful task of selection fell that these tests were actually of some practical use—that they operated automatically to eliminate the hopelessly stupid and identify the dangerously intelligent. Adoption of the psychologico-military plan has since been urged upon employers of labor and of those grades of intelligence which are to be got for hire and can be made useful in business. Already there were in the field professed or professional character-analysts whose advice and guidance in the hiring of men was accepted or sought—and occasionally even taken—with results which some employers reported to be at once surprising and gratifying.

A book by one of these adventurous and ingenious persons is therefore doubly interesting at a moment when the whole business of hiring and firing seems about to be taken away from the employer class and lodged in the hands of the employed. Mr. Balkin, in the first place, has done a considerable amount of reading in order to lay a foundation for his practice. He quotes from authorities as eminent and entertaining as Havelock Ellis, and adopts the admirable explanation of the connection between racial qualities and color which was set forth by the late Colonel Charles Woodruff, Medical Corps, U. S. A., in his "Effects of Tropical Light on White Men". To be sure it may be doubted whether the Colonel, a thorough scientist and soldier, would have been any more able than Cato's haruspex to look in the face without laughing the following "table or scale of pigmentation":

0 Albino, white hair and skin, colorless eyes.
10 Flaxen hair, light blue eyes, shell-pink skin.
20 Golden or light yellow hair, blue or light grey eyes, fair skin.
30 Red or auburn hair, grey or blue eyes, fair skin or freckles.
40 Light brown hair, blue-grey or green eyes, tinted or medium skin.
50 Brown hair, green or blue eyes, medium skin.
60 Brown or black hair, light brown or hazel eyes, creamy skin.
70 Dark brown hair, dark brown eyes, medium brunette skin.
80 Black hair, black eyes, olive or yellow skin.
90 Brown races, yellow races, mulattoes, creoles, Maoris, Indians.
100 Negro or black races.

Indignation is likely to be created in certain circles by the classification together of mulattoes and creoles, but the scale is at least comprehensive. You are advised to commit it to memory and are then told that "the normal blond" is employable in "advertising, organizing, construction, exploring, manufacturing, selling, politics, transportation, platform work, merchandising, etc."; while "the normal brunette" is adapted to "agriculture, art, literature, clerical work, drama, music,

scientific research, theology, and philosophy".

So much for color. But color is not all. The facial aspect also is to be considered. "A man who resembles the fox in form (the convex type) is quicker, swifter, keener, more responsive, and less enduring than the man who resembles the bull-dog (concave type)". This theory is developed in some detail, modern instances are multiplied by way of illustration, and photographs of many eminent persons —President Wilson, Colonel Roosevelt, Mr. Taft, Henry Ford, J. P. Morgan, Champ Clark, General Pershing, Keir Hardie, Herbert Hoover, Mae Marsh, Kitchener, and Hindenburg — are plentifully scattered through the pages.

President Wilson is declared to be "a splendid example of the mental type" which covers also the cases of Shakespeare, Whittier, Holmes, Horace Greeley, Edgar Allan Poe, Socrates, Mendelssohn, and Hall Caine. "All-around" men are Washington, Adams, Grant, Edison, Roosevelt, and Lloyd George. Careful study of the profile of the forehead will, it appears, furnish many valuable indicia, and there is something in being a fat man to console for the loss of the figure of Apollo. Our author says:

> Reference to portraits of famous judges, politicians, financiers, executives, and commercial kings will show a great tendency toward construction upon lines of a circle—i.e., round face, rounded body, and a tendency to roundness in hands and limbs. Persons possessing this as their leading element and only a moderate degree of the mental, enjoy excitement, amusement, fast driving, theatres, and social pastimes. This type usually possesses an extremely large degree of amativeness; therefore they are ardent lovers and they have large social proclivities, large selfish propensities, a head more broad than high in proportion, excellent powers of observation and good practical judgment.

The author adds that "some of the occupations most frequently found in this class of persons are owners of theatres and amusement places, restaurant proprietors, butchers, grocers, and saloon-keepers. They have exceedingly keen financial instinct and are the money-makers of the world". It is also observed—but that is a little technical—that "directly in front of the organ of Conscientiousness and on each side of Veneration lies the organ of Hope".

Of more practical value to the layman is this:

> A partial disuse of the brain is the principal cause of diseases. I have discovered that those persons who by a sudden change of circumstances are led to exercise parts of the brain that have been long neglected, invariably improve in health. In fact, this is the cause of improvement in health so often noticed in invalids by change of climate, by experiencing religion, by relaxing, by change of business, etc., and is the basis of the so-called mind cure and, in fact, the real basis of any cure ever made.

A reading of the book tends to the conclusion that the author is a shrewd fellow whose judgment of men is probably much better than his discrimination among scientific facts and theories. There is even a temptation to regard the learned display as a sort of smoke-screen for the use of a practised observation and plain common sense.

The New Science of Analyzing Character. By Harry H. Balkin. The Four Seas Co.

CHILDREN UNDER TEN AND THEIR BOOKS

BY ANNIE CARROLL MOORE

"As wise as a child four years old."

IT was William Butler Yeats who quoted the old Irish proverb and suggested its bearing on the survival of poetry and fairy tales in Ireland. By happy chance the day was St. Patrick's, and when Mr. Yeats had finished reading out of one of Lady Gregory's books, we went back to our desk in the children's room of the Pratt Institute Free Library, with songs of the poets who had dipped their pens deepest in the wisdom and faith, the beauty and fancy of childhood, thrilling our consciousness.

The room was filled with restless children of many races. Little brothers and sisters three, four, and five years old had come with big boys and girls eight, ten, and twelve years old to listen to the stories and poetry with which we were accustomed to celebrate the day and the coming of spring:

> When afther the Winter alarmin'
> The Spring steps in so charmin'
> So smilin' an' arch
> In the middle o' March
> With her hand St. Patrick's arm on!

The verse always heralded the day, taking its place beside an old print of St. Patrick. On the table below, books were opened up and shamrocks grew beside the flowers so often mentioned in stories and poems of springtime—daffodils, the narcissus poetica, a crocus, a violet, or an hepatica nursed into early bloom by an old English gardener, whose cobbler's shop led into a greenhouse. This gardener, for he was a cobbler only by circumstance, "ran away from the shoes" when a lad of twelve; and lived and worked long enough in the gardens of England to carry about with him a rare love of flowers, an expert knowledge of plant life in all its varying forms, and a deep appreciation, born of his own hunger for beauty in boyhood, of the place of nature in any form of education of children. He shared with us the desire to reflect in the children's library of a great city the life of the woods, the streams, the meadows, the hillsides and gardens of a more spacious childhood.

Very early in our work of satisfying children with books, we had discovered how many of the stories and poems known and loved by us as children were meaningless to children who had never seen the country in springtime, and whose parents seemed to have forgotten their childhood. The "nature study" of the schools was as yet unfortified by botanical specimens, or by the expanding resources of the Children's Museum of Brooklyn.

"We have been listening to a poet", we told the children on that St. Patrick's Day, "a poet who says there are still fairies in Ireland." And then Allingham's "Fairies" trooped forth, and from "The Songs of Innocence" William Blake's "Piper", "The Laughing Song", and "The Lamb"; Wordsworth's "March", Celia Thaxter's "Spring", Miss Mulock's "Green Things Growing", Emily Dickinson's "The Grass". We did not hesitate to share Mr. Yeats's own:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

We have never hesitated to share a poem we feel we would have liked as a child. We recall how still the room grew as we read:

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

There was a fairy story, of course, and we were ending with "The Jumblies" and other nonsense verses when some one called out:

"'Up the airy mountain
Down the rushy glen'

again!" This time several voices mingled in Allingham's "Fairies".

In that far-off time many libraries still observed an age limit of ten or twelve years, and gravely questioned the propriety of reading aloud to children or telling stories to children in a room from which books were being circulated or consulted in answering the casual questions brought from the schools. The public schools of Brooklyn observed a grade limit. "Children below the third grade do not read well enough to profit from the use of library books," we were told. The system of classroom libraries had not then been introduced. The children in question ranged in age, we found, from five or six to eight, and sometimes even nine years if they were backward in learning to read.

Primers and easy reading-books were by no means as attractive as they are now, and a child who was not a natural reader had very little incentive unless he could range over a number of picture books and illustrated books. What was to be done for these children who had no books at home, or having them felt no desire to open them for their pleasure?

What is to be done for such children anywhere? That thousands of them have been growing up in America, we have only to look at our statistics of illiteracy to learn.

Fortunately for us and for the children of those pioneer days in the history of children's libraries, the director of the Pratt Institute Free Library, Mary Wright Plummer, was a poet—with a deep realization of the needs and the desires of children—as well as a practical administrator and educator of international reputation. Into the plans of the architect for this library she had set a children's room with southern exposure, connected by open archways with the book stacks and open shelves of the circulation department and of the general reading room.

This children's room, the first in the country to be included in an architect's plan, was the first to be furnished with chairs and tables of varying height, the first to consider the right of little children to enjoy books, and their physical comfort in so doing. So far as we know, it was the first library to make the circulation of books subordinate to familiar acquaintance with books and pictures in a free library, and to give picture books by well-known European artists a place on the walls and the shelves of the children's room as well as of its art department. Here Boutet de Monvel's "Jeanne D'Arc" became a children's book.

From the low windows, children and grown people looked out upon a terraced playground down which the children rolled and tumbled in summer and coasted in winter—for the

trustees of this institution had played as boys in the neighborhood and had forgotten none of their interests. Their desire for this children's library was that it should grow to seem a homelike and familiar place to the children of the city. The Brooklyn Public Library, with its unique Brownsville Children's Branch Library, had not yet come into existence. Many of the children walked miles for their books, or in turn paid car-fare for one boy that he might select books for a group of his friends.

It clearly would not do to circulate books of which we had no first-hand knowledge and recent experience. We were left free to take our own way in bringing books and children of all ages together. We chose the way leading back to our own childhood and its first interests in reading. It may take a long time to get an emotional grasp of the child we used to be, and an intellectual perception of any one of several varieties we might have become in a later generation; but the chase is exhilarating and we recommend the effort to all parents, teachers, and librarians who would really know books in their relation to growing children.

I was not a bookish child, I discovered, although I had always cared to read. I have no recollection of any process or method by which I learned to read, but I hold a very vivid recollection of the first book from which I read. It was a large print edition of the Gospel of St. John. The time was early evening and I went to bed thrilled with the discovery, and the beauty of the words. I told no one until I could read well. I may have been five or even six years old, I have never been sure, but I recall very definitely that I brought to the reading of poetry, the psalms, and the prophets, strong impressions of the beauty of the country about me. Beyond Mt. Washington lay the world, just out of sight, and beyond the low horizon line to the southeast lay the sea. I had seen the sea, but I had not seen the world, and I was always wondering about it.

This sense of wonder and mystery, the beauty of nature, the passing from night to day, the speaking voices of the people about me, the sound of music, are present in my earliest recollections. I had a keen interest in pictures and I was always seeing things in pictures. I had no gift for drawing and the mechanics of writing was extremely difficult for me. I shall never be able to unearth a manuscript written before the age of ten. My early literary compositions were all scribbled and dispatched by post. I never had a doubt that what I whispered as I scribbled was read by the cousin or brother to whom it was sent. Writing, like going to school, was a social experience full of news of people and of what they said and did. Never did I write out of deeper emotions. I hated goodness in books and the tendency to get everybody to behave alike, in life or in books.

The invitation to read was all over the house, and on stormy days I roamed the rooms, following my brothers from library to attic, seeing what the books were like, often watching them reading and trying to read their books. The bound volumes of "St. Nicholas", "Our Young Folks", and "Harper's Magazine" were always in the offing and long before I could read I was familiar with their illustrations.

I did not care to be read to, except by my father, who read just as he talked and seemed to like the same

books and pictures I did. "The Nursery" was his favorite magazine, I firmly believed not because he said it was, but because he seemed so interested in it. I associate with his reading the most beautiful parts of the Bible, Æsop's "Fables" interspersed with proverbs, nonsense verses, old songs and hymns, a great deal of poetry, stories out of the lives of great men, and many stories of child life. He had a keen sense of dramatic values, a power of mimicry of animals and human beings, a strong sense of humor, and an intimate knowledge of men in their various forms of social and political organization. Moreover, he possessed the rare faculty of complete identification with the emotional life of childhood in all its stages of growth and change, and the imagination to know when to create a diversion. Since my intuitions have been at all times keener than my powers of external observation, I identified myself in turn with the childhood of my father. I seemed to have known him well as a little boy. That I was like him in certain qualities of mind I was to learn in maturity; that I shared his emotional life, I knew as well at four or five years old as at his death, when I was twenty.

We make no apology for dipping back into our childhood and the childhood of our work, in this introductory consideration of the reading of children under ten years old. We warn the reader it will not tell him just the book to read or to buy for the child he is interested in. We have never liked the idea of selecting "best books" for anybody,—least of all for a child who is trying out the reading habit, we dare not set an age limit for the reading of a book. But we feel no hesitation in bringing together a group of books, which we shall describe as "Some First Books" and a second group that we shall call "Some Later Books". These lists will appear in the February number of THE BOOKMAN.

There have been many and important changes since 1900 in the attitude toward the younger children in schools and libraries. Not only is there a great deal more story-telling and reading of poetry in both institutions; but school principals and teachers of vision, who have always been readers and lovers of books, have made it possible for classes of school children to come to public libraries for a larger view of the countries about which they are studying, or just to read books and see pictures in an environment which is known to invite reading.

There are to be still greater changes following close upon the war in all countries. Children are from birth to have better physical conditions. Mentally and spiritually they must live in a larger world than the generation that has preceded them. There are those who hold that children should have no books until long after they are ten years old. We do not propose to argue the question, but rather to give books their natural place in the expanding lives of the children we see about us.

Believing that there is no such person as "the average child" under ten years old, we are prepared to learn from children as widely different and environed as Daisy Ashford and Miss Edgeworth's "Rosamond". Ever since "The Young Visiters" was published, we have wanted to pay tribute to Mrs. Ashford, or whoever was responsible for the preservation of the record of Daisy's spontaneity and lack of self-consciousness. Rosamond's mother

would have persuaded her to consign the precious volume to the flames if she could have left her alone long enough to get it written. There has never been the slightest doubt in our minds that Daisy Ashford wrote the book and wrote it when she was nine years old, spelling and all. We share Mr. Herford's feeling about Barrie's preface and tell everybody to read it last. The author, we think, need not have read many novels. The "idear" was the thing and her unswerving development of it is an incentive to all who would write. Moreover, we look upon its publication, and the lively criticism attending it, as one more indication that we are entering upon a freer and more illuminating period of communication with childhood and children.

Is Hugh Walpole's "Jeremy" autobiographic? We do not know and we shall not press the question. We do know that he could not have written it without first putting himself in Jeremy's place. Of all the children we have lately found in books, Nicky and Michael in "The Tree of Heaven", and Mary Olivier seem to us to have been drawn by the most unerring hand. May Sinclair has made us think long and hard. It is high time the contemporary novelists who have the understanding and intuition began to create more child characters.

The publication of Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads" marked the discovery of childhood. Poetry and childhood emerged at the same time to claim their naturalization papers—in poetry, at the hands of Wordsworth; in prose, in the novels of Dickens. Too rarely, up to the present time, has a child been brought into a novel to take his place in life. It is a good omen for the novel as well as for education in general to have him enter. As early as 1902 the Swedish Government had the foresight to commission the most distinguished novelist of the country to write a book for children. Selma Lagerlöf gave three years to the preparation of her background of scientific fact and poetic fancy for "The Wonderful Adventures of Nils". "Nils Holgersson" was written for Swedish children of nine years and older, but we know a little American girl between five and six who says she likes it better than any book she has ever heard read. We read "David Blaize and the Blue Door" to this same little girl and her sister "going on eight", down in the Blue Ridge Mountains, in September. Their younger sister, not yet "four years old" but "as wise", was captivated, as were the other two, by Mr. Ford's pictures, and she listened to parts of the story.

Friendship with David was established immediately. We knew it would be with children. We took a week to read the book and could write a whole article about it, since Mr. Benson is quite manifestly one of the contemporary novelists who has been dipping back into the dreams and fancies, the sense and nonsense, of his childhood.

The eldest of the three little girls is devoted to "Punch", and has been for two or three years. Her interest in cartoons—she has been mercifully spared the "comics" of the Sunday newspapers — is suggestive. Why shouldn't some contemporary illustrators dip back into their childhood like the novelists? Tony Sarg's clever drawings for a very poor little story so charmed these children—who have a natural taste for the humor that emanates from the artist, regardless of text—as to suggest no end of possibilities.

In that fascinating life of Kate

Greenaway, which should never be allowed to go out of print, there is a skit by Randolph Caldecott, done after the manner of Kate Greenaway, that is both amusing and revealing to children and grownups who like to look at pictures. There is also much evidence of Kate Greenaway's early delight in cartoons.

We began with the wisdom and the sense of beauty inherent in childhood, and we would end with a plea for humor. For humor with some standard of imaginative conception, accuracy of drawing, and suitability of subject. We have long believed that humor should be given its due in the education of children. The solemnity of the process of education has made too easy the way that leads to the vulgarization of art and the prostitution of fancy. To the picture books, the cartoons, and the drawings—to which children under ten years old are exposed—no less surely than to imaginative writing, must we look for the development of that sound streak of humor which gets one behind "the Blue Door" at any age. Randolph Caldecott did not hang up the key to "the Blue Door" on the other side. He passed it on to Leslie Brooke in England who still unlocks it for the children of America.

Songs of Innocence. By William Blake. John Lane Co.

*Poems. By William Butler Yeats. London. T. Fisher Unwin.

*Verses. By Mary Wright Plummer. Privately printed.

Jeanne d'Arc. By M. Boutet de Monvel. Plon-Nourrit et Cie.

The Bible. Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Æsop's Fables. Edited by Joseph Jacobs. The Macmillan Co.

*The Young Visiters. By Daisy Ashford. George H. Doran Company.

*Jeremy. By Hugh Walpole. George H. Doran Company.

*The Tree of Heaven. By May Sinclair. The Macmillan Co.

*Mary Olivier: A Life. By May Sinclair. The Macmillan Co.

The Wonderful Adventures of Nils. By Selma Lagerlöf. Doubleday Page and Co.

David Blaize and the Blue Door. By E. F. Benson. George H. Doran Company.

*Kate Greenaway. By M. H. Spielmann and G. S. Layard. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Picture Books. By Randolph Caldecott. Frederick Warne and Co.

The Golden Goose. By Leslie Brooke. Frederick Warne and Co.

*For the adult reader.

EDWARD ARLINGTON ROBINSON

BY SAMUEL ROTH

IN 1896 an obscure Boston publisher issued a small book of verse entitled "Children of the Night", by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The time was one of pause and anxiety to the spirit of American literature, which had just witnessed a futile generation of New England poets displaced by a company of Atlantic States poets who promised only to contribute to the already ponderous stock of American transitional verse.

"Children of the Night" found a few individual admirers, but evoked no general interest. It was barely noticed by a press that had become fairly indifferent to matters literary. Yet "Children of the Night" introduced a new diction to English poetry. The sketches of Richard Cory, John Evereldown, Reuben Bright, and Hesper Helphenstine fathered the school of poetry which was to be enriched by the names of John Masefield, Walter de la Mare, Ralph Hodgson, and Robert Frost.

The book is a series of small-town sketches of small-town people and small-town places. But the poet's peculiar touch invests these things with the universal interest which attaches to the small towns sung by Oliver Goldsmith and A. E. Housman. At that time Robinson was a New Englander of the New England which burned Hester Prynne and then wrote "The Scarlet Letter"—for these New Englanders, mind you, could write. What is more, he lived in Gardiner. How, ask people, could a great poet have been born in Gardiner?

But it is precisely in Gardiner that Robinson had to be born. Gardiner is a little town in Maine, on the north bank of the Kennebec, a river that does not perform the useful function of turning a single mill-wheel. The Kennebec is noted for the bright blueness of its current. It is a poet's river. So is Gardiner a poet's town. Most people in Gardiner have lived there all their lives. Their fathers lived there all their lives, as also their fathers' fathers, who hailed from England. England gives her poor a language and thereby adds a glamour of beauty to their misery. In the light of that glamour the hardness and poverty of life in Gardiner and in the rest of the world stands out in stark relief.

A kindly but impatient despair seethes through the pages of this little book. Richard Cory, the rich man of the town, one summer night puts a bullet through his head. John Evereldown, faithless, friendless, yearning for the lights down the river, adventures endlessly among women. Reuben Bright, the butcher, witnesses the death of his wife whom disease caught young, and tears down the slaughterhouse. "There isn't very much to write, there isn't very much to do", the poet says of James Wetherell—and implies about life in general. But his choice of themes and his attitude toward them are not so significant as his manner of writing, which was new and strange.

Robinson had discovered that simply by making a plain statement of

certain important things, he achieved a poetic effect unlike anything known to poetry except possibly the ballad. But the ballad has certain definite functions—it tells a story and it makes a sentimental song. Robinson had a student's interest in the life about him, and by means of this new medium, it appeared, he was enabled to acquire a clearer vision of things and people. It may easily be imagined that the discovery did not leave the poet undisturbed and confident. Was this poetry? This question must have often presented itself to him, if indeed it was not urged on him by knowing friends. Robinson wrote in the old meters. He often employed stock poetic phrases. But all the stanza forms he used resolved themselves to the level of the ballad statement of fact, and the stock poetic phrases were an ironic reflection on the poverty of a life of which the phrase was the sole grandeur. Robinson's achievement was a hard fought, not easily earned victory for himself—it was an all-too-easy victory for the generation of American poets who came after him and who, in the intoxication of triumph, followed the burning of the bridges behind them by setting fire to the bridges before them.

The five years following the publication of "Children of the Night" were busy ones for the young poet eager to sound the possibilities of his new medium. As yet he was the sole inhabitant as well as the sole pioneer of the new realm. Writers of verse there were, as always, in plenty, but they had not read "Children of the Night" or they were uninfluenced by it. That did not trouble Robinson much, and he continued his researches alone. He had by this time learned two things very important for his future as a poet: that his talents were peculiarly adapted to the study of people and that he must get out of Gardiner. For the illumined darkness of Gardiner he embraced the unrelieved darkness of New York.

If going to New York was not the poet's deliberate choice, the accident was providential. Gardiner, which gave the poet his soul, could not also give him a mastery of life. New York is a good laboratory for young poets. Put a young poet in a back room on Seventh Avenue, keep him jobless for a year, and he will either produce a good book or he will surrender to the advices of his landlady. On Seventh Avenue, during a time of bitter poverty and arduous struggle, Edwin Arlington Robinson met a Jewish vagabond who became the Captain Craig of his next book.

"Captain Craig", the title poem of the new book, is in more than one respect a splendid poem. It is the portrayal of a very beautiful soul whose appeal to us is not the less urgent because it cries out to us from loathsome circumstances which we, not deliberately, set up for the dramatic fulfilment of such people. The poet no longer dismisses his fatality with a gesture of despair—he holds his fatality at arm's length and argues with it. A little too lengthily, one feels. This argumentative quality in "Captain Craig" is the danger flag before an impossible abyss, the abyss of futile speculation, into which Robinson would certainly have plunged had he remained in Gardiner. By the breath in which Robinson escapes this abyss, "Captain Craig" escapes the fatality of desperate boredom.

The importance of the new book is enhanced by the inclusion of "Isaac and Archibald", a poem more beautiful and more readable than "Captain Craig", if not as significant. This

poem belongs to Gardiner; the two old men who secretly suspect each other's mental health, and confide in the bright eager youth who seems to enjoy their companionship, belong to the tribe of Richard Cory and Reuben Bright. The difference between this poem and the verses in the first book is that the poet, having emerged into a larger, broader life, can look back upon Gardiner with more pause and humor. Pause, humor, and patience—these are the new elements in the poet's new book. Patience above all. "Captain Craig" may be described as a patient study of the details of futility.

But even "Captain Craig" might have passed unnoticed but for the wonder of some curious reviewers who wanted to know in the name of what impossible fetish did this strange fellow go into minute descriptions of weird, harmless and—what seemed worse—entirely imaginative people. Luckily Theodore Roosevelt read the book, and in his blunt way told the American public that he had discovered a real poet. The name Edwin Arlington Robinson emerged into the light.

Robinson allowed almost ten years to pass before issuing another book. The poet was passing through another more difficult transition. In New York it had been necessary for him to measure the moral distance back to Gardiner, and now that his fame had transcended New York it was necessary for him to understand her. The "town down the river" is New York, which Robinson invests with the sad grandeur of his native Gardiner. The poems written around Calverly's are among the most beautiful in all his work. Calverly's is likely an obscure rendezvous where he was accustomed to meet his old friends, whom he remembers as Leffingwell, Clavering, and Lingard. Lingard, the Mooncalf—here's a magic. These are New York people. They come in through mysterious doors from an indescribable darkness; they go out through mysterious doors into an indescribable darkness.

"The Town Down the River" is a book of transition. With the passing of Calverly's, Leffingwell, Clavering, and Lingard, something definite has passed out of the poet's life—the element of the personal which is the dominant characteristic of European literature. A contemporary, noting this characteristic, says of the European that he "tends to exhibit himself in a romantic light; in fact, to recommend himself as a lover". This is a remarkable summary of the terrible literary diversion which keeps most of us, Americans as well as Europeans, calf-minded and calf-hearted. Although Robinson never showed a tendency to "recommend himself as a lover" in this book, he breaks entirely with the European tradition, giving his heart and his intellect over to the consideration of those things more strictly within the realm of wisdom, which was an ancient requirement in poetry. Robinson has become not merely the singer of an individual troubled destiny, but the troubled singer of a collective world-destiny which has placed the burden of vision on him.

Then followed another silence of six years. During that time a storm had broken over the literary field of America. "The Everlasting Mercy" by John Masefield was published in the year 1911, a year after the appearance of "The Town Down the River". It created an upheaval on both sides of the Atlantic. In America John Masefield found a hundred imitators. But

it is important to remember only that at last the English world had caught up with the modern accent of the singer from Gardiner, and what Robinson had been striving for fifteen years was at last achieved.

Two years after the appearance of "The Everlasting Mercy", "Spoon River Anthology" by Edgar Lee Masters appeared. Alongside of it came Robert Frost's "North of Boston". A hundred poets and almost as many schools of poets leaped into the incandescent light of an American poetic renascence. There was talk and intertalk by many people concerning many things not all strictly poetry. The bookshop keepers moved their poetry departments a little nearer to where people could see them.

"The Man Against the Sky", Robinson's next book, was issued to a world which had given itself over in worship to new names and new schools. The book was a sharp reminder to America that long before Mr. Masters had seen the vision of Spoon River, Mr. Robinson had created a more tuneful Tilbury Town whose people were not the less real because the poet failed to enumerate the details of their toilette, and did not send them all repentent to their graves. "The Man Against the Sky" was more than a reminder. It added several significant character studies to the already choice Robinsonian portrait gallery—Flammonde, John Gorham, Old King Cole, Llewellyn, Bokardo, Bewick Finzer, and Shakespeare in "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford".

But these new portraits, though they have not become less true as works of art, have become more illumined as national figures for the illumination and guidance of the American national mind. Robinson having transcended his rôle of interpreter has become the national guide. Flammonde is the real man against the sky, the man whose own fate is a matter of strange conjecture for his neighbors, but who has a kindly understanding of the social problems about him and offers a kindly, final solution. The man against the sky is incarnated also in John Gorham, who confesses that he will never understand Jane Wayland for sheer lack of time to devote to such trifles; in Old King Cole who does not trouble about the wickedness of his sons because they are a part of the inevitable good humor of the race; in Shakespeare who tops his ambitions as a poet with the ignoble ambition to become the Duke of Stratford; in Bokardo, who was about to commit suicide but returns to Washington Square instead; the man against the sky is also Edwin Arlington Robinson.

With this new book Edwin Arlington Robinson brings into English poetry a poetic personality strongly suggestive of the prophet of the ancient world. Robinson differs from the prophet only as modern life differs from ancient life and as modern people, who are to be guided by the poet, differ from the ancient people who were guided by the prophet. Like the ancient prophets, Robinson insists on individual and national righteousness, on mercy and gentleness to the old and the bereaved—indeed his insistence on the ancient virtues is, under the circumstances, nothing less than iconoclastic. In poems like "Lincoln", "The Revealer", "Cassandra", "The Poor Relation", "Eros Turranos", "The Unforgiven", and "The Man Against the Sky", his insight into our difficulties as individuals and as a people is penetrating and kindly.

It is too early now to say anything

about "Merlin", which was published in 1917. None of the reviewers quite understood it, but there will be a better appreciation of it, and a sounder knowledge of its value, when the sequel, "Lancelot", is issued. It is also too early to say definitely just what Robinson has given to literature. That he has made a contribution, no one doubts. This, however, may be said with certainty: he set the standard for contemporary American poetry and he has upheld this standard better than any of his contemporaries.

THE PHILIPPINE LIBRARY

A Phase of American Altruism in the Island Colony

BY EMMA SAREPTA YULE

PUBLIC libraries the world over never seem to be topics in the booster's song or the knocker's wail. In this conventionality the Philippines are no exception. Investigators who have come to the Islands—and there has been a stream of them the last few years—have been whirled over kilometers of American-built roads and given glimpses of new concrete bridges, been taken on "school-seeing" jaunts, have had machine guns loaded with sanitation and agricultural statistics turned on them; but whether they have been frank, conscientious lookers-into-things or confidential agents of government, it is doubtful if any have heard "Now we will show you our library" even murmured in a "Will you have a cup of tea?" tone. So with the tourist, the one who wants to "see everything" as well as the one who desires really to know what American altruism has done in the colony: to both alike the Philippine Library seems to be taboo. Bostonians may refer to their library in conversation with visitors in their city, a New Yorker may possibly mention the Public Library, but in the Philippines it is simply "not done".

Though it is not talked about, as a matter of fact, among the forces at work transforming the Philippines from a condition of mediævalism into a state that shall be within earshot of the twentieth century, the Philippine Library is far from being a negligible value. In the hardest task of the transformation, that of giving to the Filipinos a common language, the Philippine Library, particularly during the last four or five years, has been a potent, far-reaching force. For, obviously, with no means of common expression the Filipinos were a bookless people. Today not only are hundreds of thousands of books accessible to the English-reading Filipino, but through the quiet, unsung influence of the Philippine Library, instruction in the use of libraries both school and public is now given in the public schools.

Legislatively, the Library came into its own in February, 1916, when the Philippine legislature passed an act creating the "Philippine Library and Museum" by consolidating under this name, for administration, the Philippine Library, the Division of Archives, Patents, Copyrights, and Trade

Marks, and the Law and Library Division of the Philippine Assembly. This marks such an attainment of growth that special interest is aroused in the Philippine Library which forms a large part of the structure, as well as being the foundation of the newly created institution. For this Library, considered as a separate institution, as it still is for working purposes, is, with possibly the exception of the Library of the Imperial University of Japan, the largest library in the Orient. It is by far the largest institution of its kind in any colony in the East. For seekers after information in many lines it is a rich storehouse, while for the student of Philippine history and conditions it is a veritable treasure-mine.

If only for the reason that its origin and organization into an institution are so splendidly American, the history of the Philippine Library has interest for readers in the United States. It was in the very early days of American occupation of the Islands (through the efforts of Mrs. Greenleaf, wife of General Charles Greenleaf, then stationed in Manila) that the American Circulating Library Association was organized,—

> . . . to create a source of instruction and profitable entertainment for all residents of Manila, whether permanent or transient, or of whatever race and nationality, and to disseminate useful knowledge and literary diversion among those officers and men of the military and naval forces who are stationed throughout the Archipelago.

There was also in the aim of these pioneer founders the fine sentiment of making the Library a memorial to the soldiers and sailors of the United States army and navy who paid the full measure of devotion to country under tropical skies, on soil drenched by tropical rains, far from the homeland. Though the American Circulating Library passed through various phases of control before it became, in July, 1910, the nucleus of the Circulating Division of the Philippine Library created that year by act of the Philippine legislature, the ten memorial collections have been kept intact and are today an interesting part of the Circulating Division. Except in the inert, the calloused, there must be pause of reverential regard of these silent testimonials, given to the memory of the soldier dead, to become the cornerstone of an institution for a people in whose subjugation the lives were lost.

The division which gives distinction to the Philippine Library—the distinction that we associate with the pride of lineage and the mellowing influence of time—is the Filipiniana Division. Because of its history and the rareness and pricelessness of many of its possessions and its peculiar individual value, this division merits fuller mention than any other part of the Library. The first step by the government toward making a collection of books, documents, manuscripts, and periodicals pertaining to Philippine history was during the Spanish regime. In the earlier years of American occupation this collection—which though small included titles of value—might have been entirely lost had it not been for Dr. David P. Barrows, who rescued what remained of the acquisition and placed it as a separate section of the American Circulating Library, thus founding the Filipiniana Division, which now numbers several thousands of volumes. When the Philippine Library was created in 1910 the Filipiniana Division was given its proper place and its real existence began.

From many places have been gathered the volumes now filling the book-

stacks in the large room over the doors of which is the inscription, "Filipiniana Division". No factory-made volumes are they. Each book tells a tale of personal association and many have marks that could be stamped only by an existence Ulysses might have envied. Some volumes are wrapped in misty veils of romance; while others, though not deeply graven by time's moving finger, hold interest by more vital claims. Here are the original manuscripts of Dr. José Rizal's novel "Noli Me Tangere" and of his most noted poem, "Mi Ultimo Adios". The latter manuscript was written by Rizal while confined under sentence of death in Fort Santiago, Manila's Tower of London. Knowing that the manuscript would be destroyed if discovered, Rizal concealed it in an alcohol lamp which he was permitted to have in his dungeon. When he bade his sister farewell the night before his execution, he gave her the lamp with the hint that there was "something inside". This manuscript of Rizal's "Last Farewell" found its way later to the United States and was sold to the War Department for three hundred dollars. The Philippine government reimbursed this amount and finally the manuscript, a thin sheet of paper written on both sides, was brought back to its proper home.

Among the manuscripts that have been collected locally, three, written on boñga bark in the old Visayan dialect, rank first for historic value. The records of Bilibid, the insular prison, number up into the thousands. A Hawthorne could find some rare tales among these papers. The Honorable W. Cameron Forbes during his term as Governor-General of the Philippines caused to be collected a large number of Provincial Papers, invaluable as sources of history. Much of the material contained in these papers was secured from the old people in the provincial towns and from family records. Stored in such archives, much of this local historical data even now would be irretrievably lost, had executive authority a few years ago been indifferent or failed to recognize its value.

In 1913, the Philippine legislature appropriated one hundred thousand dollars for the purchase of the library of the Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas. This truly splendid acquisition of about six thousand volumes, not counting copies of documents and periodicals, gives the Philippine Library the distinction of possessing the richest collection of Filipiniana in the world. Furthermore, it makes it impossible for any collection to be gathered in the future that can in any way compare with it.

It is worth while even for one slightly given to bibliolatry to look at, touch, and smell these centuries-old books which American initiative, urged by a comprehending appreciation of value other than material, has brought together in the government controlled library of our island colony, our "farthest frontier". The queer-looking tomes, the shabby little volumes, exhale a musty aroma of the past that is most alluring. "Much have they seen and known": the history of their existence alone is an epitome of modern European colonization. Their journey from the offices of a European commercial company to the library of a colony in the Orient is consonant with the character of present-day relations existing between the East and the West; for no longer is the wealth of the new regions in the Orient exchanged solely for material commodities from west-

ern countries. Then the sweeping changes of time, as shown by the presence of these rare old volumes on the modern book-stacks in the Library in Manila, appeal to one powerfully. With the vision of the past which they call up comes also the vision of the future "and the wonder that will be".

For the immediate present one thinks that it is rather wonderful that the Filipino youth has the opportunity even to see "De Moluccis Insulis", the earliest published account of the circumnavigation of the globe. In this tale of the ocean trip—of which Pigafetta wrote, "Of a verity I believe no such voyage will ever be made again" —Maximilianus Transilvanus gives the first published record of the discovery of the Philippine Islands. Among the many other rare books may be mentioned as of special interest: "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas", by Antonio Morga, the most reliable of the early Philippine chroniclers; and "Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del reyno de la China", by Juan Gonzales de Mendoza. Of the forty editions of this book twenty-seven are in this collection, filling a shelf that would make any book-collector break a well-known commandment.

The value of the Filipiniana Division to one studying any phase of the Philippines cannot be placed too high. In no other country in the Orient which is or has been under the influence of western ideas and thought, is there a collection of books pertaining to the history of the country that can in any way compare with the Filipiniana Division of the Philippine Library. In view of the fact that the age of the Library numbers fewer years than the American flag has floated over the Islands, this is remarkable, and may well be a matter of national pride, for it is a condition that is to the credit and honor of American control in the land of the primitive, the "land where everything can wait". Other departments may not have the unique interest of the Filipiniana Division, but many hundreds of workers now and in the past bear witness to the utility of the Science Division, the best scientific library in the Orient; to the well organized Public Document Division; while the daily patronage of the Periodical and Circulating Divisions testifies as to their usefulness.

It was a piece of good fortune that when the Philippine Library was created, and for four years thereafter, a man so well equipped as Dr. James A. Robertson should have been appointed librarian. The organization of the Library and the bringing together of the priceless Filipiniana are largely due to his efforts. Dr. Robertson's research work in compiling and translating, in collaboration with Miss Emma H. Blair, the "History of the Philippines" (fifty-nine volumes) qualified him in a practical way for this work. And in a country where the people are just finding their way, with leading and considerable pushing, into the world of books, into the fuller life given by a common language rich in literature and learning, it was not of little importance in the formative period of the national library of this people that the man at the head should be what Dr. Robertson is—a booklover, a scholar, a man with a warm, helpful spirit and an abiding desire to create in others a love for "feeding on the dainties bred in books".

FICTION IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The following lists of books in demand in October and November in the public libraries of the United States have been compiled from reports made by two hundred representative libraries, in every section of the country and in cities of all sizes down to ten thousand population. The order of choice is as stated by the librarians.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1. The Lamp in the Desert	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
2. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
3. Dangerous Days	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
4. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
5. Mare Nostrum	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
6. Saint's Progress	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
2. Dangerous Days	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
3. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
4. The Lamp in the Desert	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
5. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
6. Saint's Progress	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
2. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
3. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
4. The Arrow of Gold	*Joseph Conrad*	DOUBLEDAY
5. The Great Hunger	*Johan Bojer*	MOFFAT
6. The Undying Fire	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
2. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
3. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
4. Dangerous Days	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
5. Ramsey Milholland	*Booth Tarkington*	DOUBLEDAY
6. The Tin Soldier	*Temple Bailey*	PENN

WESTERN STATES

1. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
2. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
3. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
4. The Lamp in the Desert	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
5. Dangerous Days	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
6. Saint's Progress	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1. The Re-creation of Brian Kent	*Harold Bell Wright*	BOOK SUPPLY CO.
2. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	*Vicente Blasco Ibáñez*	DUTTON
3. Dangerous Days	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	DORAN
4. The Lamp in the Desert	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
5. The Young Visiters	*Daisy Ashford*	DORAN
6. Saint's Progress	*John Galsworthy*	SCRIBNER

GENERAL BOOKS IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The titles have been scored by the simple process of giving each a credit of six for each time it appears as first choice, and so down to a score of one for each time it appears in sixth place. The total score for each section and for the whole country determines the order of choice in the table herewith.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
2. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
3. Theodore Roosevelt	*Wm. Roscoe Thayer*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
4. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
5. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
6. Letters of Susan Hale	*Caroline P. Atkinson*	MARSHALL JONES

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
3. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
4. Analyzing Character	*Katherine M. Blackford*	ALDEN
5. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
6. Raymond	*Sir Oliver Lodge*	DORAN

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
3. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
4. Raymond	*Sir Oliver Lodge*	DORAN
5. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
6. The New Revelation	*A. Conan Doyle*	DORAN

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
3. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
4. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
5. Raymond	*Sir Oliver Lodge*	DORAN
6. The New Revelation	*A. Conan Doyle*	DORAN

WESTERN STATES

1. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
3. Raymond	*Sir Oliver Lodge*	DORAN
4. An American Idyll	*Cornelia Stratton Parker*	ATLANTIC
5. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
6. Analyzing Character	*Katherine M. Blackford*	ALDEN

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. Belgium	*Brand Whitlock*	APPLETON
3. The Seven Purposes	*Margaret Cameron*	HARPER
4. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
5. Raymond	*Sir Oliver Lodge*	DORAN
6. Analyzing Character	*Katherine M. Blackford*	ALDEN

THE GOSSIP SHOP

AS a matter of theory the Gossip Shop is "agin" volumes of "selections" from the works of great authors. It has always seemed to us (in theory) not good taste for one to have such books. Their possession, we have been fond of saying, is a reflection of a cheap sort of mind. They can only give an easy, false half knowledge of a work of literature. In order to own a book with the mind, one must own it complete in the form of a volume or of volumes. To have an instinct for acquiring volumes of "selections" is to have an instinct for dribbling thought. Good, sound philosophy, psychology (whatever you call it), that, too.

But, in practice, we find that this is not always so. Take us, for instance. And take, say, Boswell's "Life of Samuel Johnson". One of the most extraordinary, and one of the most entertaining books in the world. We have read it through, from first page to last, time and again. Still we have not read it through lately. Not, in fact, for some considerable time. Too busy! Too much else got to be read right off. True, we might take down one of the volumes of our set, and dip into it here and there a bit now and then. While we are waiting a few moments for dinner to be served. Or in the brief interval after we have shaved and just before we go to bed —we always shave at night so as to be able to sleep a few minutes later in the morning. But we don't—that is, we don't take down one of the volumes of this set and dip into it a couple of minutes or so at a time. And so, we fear, we have been getting a little rusty in the matter of our Boswell. A serious matter, this.

But now the other day along comes one of these despicable volumes of "selections". Charmingly bound, attractively printed affair, altogether admirable in its dignity. What is it? "Selections from James Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson." Chosen and edited by R. W. Chapman, M. A., R. G. A. Frontispiece portrait from the Sir Joshua Reynolds portrait of 1756. Editor's notes, index, etc. Humph!

Well, we glance into it. Pretty soon we are carrying it around. Take it along to lunch. Take it on the bus. On the subway. Never would cart our set about in such places. Quite a Johnsonian again, we are. And there you are!

Also, doubtless there are a lot of people who would never become acquainted with Boswell at all except through a volume of selections. And the Doctor himself, who was at first angry with Bishop Hurd for publishing a mutilated Cowley, afterward relented, allowing that "there is no impropriety in a man's publishing as much as he chooses of any author, if he does not put the rest out of the way".

Thomas L. Masson was telling the Gossip Shop at lunch the other day what was what if Shakespeare had married Jane Austen. Later it (the Gossip Shop) tried to make a note of it (Mr. Masson's argument), but could not recapture the intricacies of T. L. M's idea. So the Gossip Shop

called up Mr. Masson, and over the wire he spoke as follows:

"It is the privilege of everybody to have opinions. The great thing is to select a subject about which there are such diversities of opinions among others, that no matter what your opinions are you are fairly safe in expressing them.

"But in modern literary work, safety is the least necessary thing. The great point is to do something so different from what was expected of you that you may thus establish a reputation as a critic. Once get this reputation well in hand and the rest is easy. You can say anything you like and get away with it.

"Bernard Shaw is a commonplace example of this literary law. He modestly claimed himself as great as Shakespeare. And as Shakespeare had died some time previously, there was nobody to defend him and Mr. Shaw won in the first round. Anybody who wished to ascertain the truth would have had to read both Shakespeare and Shaw, and who has time for this? Since Mr. Shaw's triumph,—or at least until the war came,—Mr. Shaw's reputation as a critic was firmly established. Bishops trembled before him, and the trembling of bishops is first aid to all critics. No one questioned Mr. Shaw's right to take a fall out of a dead man. Mr. Shaw is an Irishman.

"Ignatius Donnelly also used another stepping-stone to notoriety, which, in this country, accomplishes the same result as true greatness in any other. He declared that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare at all. Many people believed in him and do so to this day, just as they believe in Mr. Bryan's political caste.

"It will be said that Shakespeare could not have married Jane Austen, because of chronology. But what, pray, is chronology? Shakespeare himself paid little attention to it. He used clocks, for example, that were not invented until after the date of the scene he was writing about. There is in reality no chronology. To a man studying Greek history, there are a great many things that he hasn't learned. They appear to lie in the past, but for him they lie in the future. Chronology is largely a matter of temperament. The world is said to date from about four thousand years before Christ. But long before this date, it was the end of the world to a whole lot of people.

"Shakespeare did not begin to live until about the time that Jane Austen began to write. They thought so little of him that his name was rarely mentioned in polite literary circles. Death after all—bodily death—is only an incident. So far as their real immortality is concerned, Shakespeare and Jane Austen grew up together.

"Of all the marriages that ought to have taken place but didn't, it has always seemed to me that the marriage of Jane and gentle Will would have been the best one. They would have proved a number of things. Shakespeare was not only companionable but easy to get along with. He did not fuss. He had a sense of humor. Jane Austen also had a sense of humor. This would have been the first marriage in the world where both parties possessed one. And what a number of interesting things that would have established!

"There are of course women who have a sense of humor but they never seem to marry men who have any. Because of this one-sided arrangement, it means that either a man must always get along with a woman, or a woman must always get along with a

man, but never that both must get along with either.

"They also both liked the country. Did any two people ever marry who both liked the country? If the woman likes it, then the man prefers to be cooped up in an apartment, where he can have easy and direct access to all life's major vulgarities. If the man likes it, the woman prefers hothouse flowers and cabarets. The woman likes the window open and the man prefers it shut.

"They were both modest. Jane Austen preferred to write the things that she knew she could do, rather than to write to order. Shakespeare was so busy writing good plays that he never even advertised himself enough to be remembered. Nobody knows what he ate for breakfast or how he parted his hair.

"It will be said by some ignorant people that they were too much alike to get along, on the principle that the happiest marriages occur between opposites. It would have been worth while for Jane Austen and Shakespeare to have married if for nothing else than to prove that this is not so."

A London booklover writes to the Gossip Shop:

"Founded early in the war, the 'Tomorrow Club' has for its object that of bringing together Londoners who write, editors, and publishers in a pleasant, informal way on one evening of each week. A short lecture generally opens the proceedings; and the clever secretary of the club, Mrs. Dawson Scott, herself a well-known novelist, managed to secure last autumn a brilliant series of addresses. Among the lecturers and subjects have been Alec Waugh on 'The Work of the Younger Novelists', Mr. Swinnerton on 'The Making of a Book', Bernard Shaw on 'The Society of Authors', and W. L. George on 'Authors and Agents'.

"It is always a moot point as to how far it is beneficial for an author to know other authors, editors, and publishers. There are certain writers who are never seen in the London literary world, to name at random: Conrad, Hewlett, Belloc, Conan Doyle,—all live out of London, and are very rarely met in the highways or byways of New Grub Street. On the other hand the great majority of English authors are Londoners, if not by birth, then by adoption, and seem to delight in nothing so much as in the world of letters.

"By far the most interesting literary gatherings the present writer has ever attended were those held some years ago in Hugh Walpole's pleasant bachelor rooms somewhere near Portland Place. There the then little-known and very youthful romancer brought together a most notable collection of fellow novelists. The meetings which took place in the evening were quite informal and very delightful. A feature which was on the whole popular, though in this connection it would be extremely invidious to mention names, was the fact that the host was adamant as to not asking the non-writing husbands or wives of his guests! It was a case of 'Only novelists may apply for an invitation'.

"Apropos of poetical drama, American lovers of good verse should have their attention drawn to A. Hugh Fisher's 'The Marriage of Ilario'. This 'conceited comedy', as the author calls it, has attracted the attention and warm praise of Mr. Fisher's fellow poets. The scene of the drama

is set in mediæval Italy. There are fourteen characters and if, as now seems possible, historical drama becomes the fashion,—for strange to say there is a fashion in such things,—this play in verse has a fine chance of being seen by the bigger public. It is perhaps unnecessary to remind American readers that the volume of Mr. Fisher's poems which appeared just before the war, attracted the more serious critics of verse. Mr. Fisher is an occasional contributor to many of the American magazines.

"I was interested and surprised to learn some time ago that the author of 'Lord Richard in the Pantry', the successful farcical comedy in which Cyril Maude has secured a triumph, is very closely connected with literature. He is Dr. Maurice Nicoll, son of Sir William Robertson Nicoll, the brilliant critic, writer and editor of 'The British Weekly', who was once nicknamed by a friend of mine 'the hare with many friends'. Dr. Nicoll first wrote 'Lord Richard' as a story under the pseudonym of Martin Swayne. He is the author of one of the good war books, and he served in the Mesopotamian campaign.

"Sir William Robertson Nicoll has played a great, if often a hidden, part in the lives of certain famous writers. It may be doubted if 'Ian Maclaren' would ever have started on a literary career had it not been that he was Nicoll's intimate friend. I believe it to be a fact that Sir William chose the title 'Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush'. Yet another writer whom he may almost be said to have created is the brilliant Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler. Sir William knew her from childhood, owing to his intimacy with her father, the late Lord Wolverhampton, and he persuaded her to try her hand at a novel, the result being 'Concerning Isabel Carnaby'.

"Those Americans who are interested in late Victorian life and society will be grateful to me for recommending to them the 'Memoir of Sophia Matilda Palmer, Comtesse de Franqueville'. She was one of the children of the famous British Lord Chancellor who was known for most of his life as Roundell Palmer, and who became the first Lord Selborne. This clever, brilliant, and exceedingly good woman had a most interesting and varied life. The book contains vivid glimpses of noted people as different as were and are Mr. Balfour, Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Chamberlain, Gladstone, Lecky, Tennyson, and Robert Browning. At the age of fifty Lady Sophia married a distinguished Frenchman, the Comte de Franqueville; and the last chapters of the book describe the first year of war in France from a peculiarly intimate and poignant point of view. Such volumes are of the stuff of which real history is made, if only because of many interesting letters, not one of which was written for publication. This means, as a rule, that the reader gets the truth and nothing but the truth, instead of a doctored version of what perhaps never happened at all!

"I am looking forward to 'Mid-Victorian Memories', written by the late Miss Betham-Edwards. This clever old lady lived for many years past at Hastings, within a stone's throw of Coventry Patmore's house. She had had a most full and varied life and had been intimate with many noted people. George Eliot and George Henry Lewes were both very fond of her, and she was the confidante of a good many members of the now famous group of British Ro-

mantics. Like so many Englishwomen of her type and generation she was passionately devoted to France, and at one time of her life she was engaged to a distinguished Frenchman, whose death caused her lifelong sorrow. She did a great deal to make the French and English known to one another, and she possessed a number of French academic distinctions. The book will probably throw new light on the several mid-Victorian celebrities of whom we still know comparatively little.

"Another work to which I am looking forward even more eagerly is 'Intimate Recollections of George Meredith'. The author, now Lady Butcher, figures in George Meredith's letters as the delightful Alice Brandreth. Meredith had many young women friends, and that at all times of his long life. He delighted in beauty and in feminine charm, and he always paid any intelligent girl who had the good fortune to come across his path, the compliment of treating her as a cultivated human being. He never talked down to a young woman, and thus we may be sure that what Lady Butcher calls 'A book of intimate anecdote and remembered talks' will be of the highest value and interest. Lady Butcher is a sister-in-law of George Prothero, the agreeable and erudite editor of 'The Quarterly Review'.

"Apropos of George Meredith, I once heard him speak with the bitterest retrospective loathing of his work as a publisher's reader. It is indeed a strange thing that anyone who knew that amazingly bold and original genius could have thought him in any way fitted to know what the great public was likely to admire. The real wonder is not that he rejected 'East Lynne', but that he ever accepted a single ordinary novel! 'East Lynne' was not his only *gaffe*, to use an untranslatable French expression. He is said to have also declined 'Lady Audley's Secret', and it is a fact that he turned down 'The Heavenly Twins'. These unfortunate misreadings of the public taste were a serious matter for the then Readers; and one wonders why the late Frederick Chapman, who was a very shrewd human being as well as a clever publisher, ever kept Meredith on as taster. His one big find, as most people know, was 'The Story of an African Farm', which had a phenomenal sale, and which had been rejected by many other publishing firms before it was offered to Chapman and Hall.

"W. L. George has distressed his friends, and delighted his enemies, by coming out as a full-blown Bolshevik! The London 'Times', when recording the fact, calls him, rather unkindly, 'a sensational novelist'. But he is, of course, much more than that. Some of his novels, notably 'The Making of an Englishman', were very serious bits of work, and in 'The Woman of Tomorrow' he made a valiant attempt to tackle a very difficult problem. Mr. George's first novel 'A Bed of Roses' was banned by the Library Censorship, but sold all the same many thousands even in the expensive library edition. Personally I prefer 'Israel Kalisch', his least popular book. W. L. George is a nephew of Sir Lionel Phillips, one of the Rand millionaires, and he would probably have had a very big career in business had he not given up the City for literature.

"The most interesting of the new literary ventures is undoubtedly 'The London Mercury'. This new review which will appeal only to those inter-

ested in the better kind of literature, is edited by the poet J. C. Squire, and he has as assistant editor another poet, Edward Shanks, who, it will be remembered, was last summer awarded the Hawthornden Prize. The two editors tell me that they want to maintain a very high critical standard, and they hope to do this by opening their pages to the best contemporary critics. They also hope to publish first-class creative work, both in prose and poetry. Their list of contributors opens well with Thomas Hardy, Conrad, Yeats, Gosse, Birrell, Professor Gilbert Murray, Mrs. Meynell, Chesterton, Belloc, Clutton-Brock, and—among the quite young men—Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Nichols."

'Nother Oliver Herford story: the other night the Gossip Shop introduced a man to Mr. Herford. We said, "Mr. So-and-so, Mr. Herford". And we added, "a humorist". Mr. Herford turned on us in a flash. "You're another!" he cried.

There has recently appeared, issued by a Cincinnati publishing house, what is called the "Gentleman's Edition" of Boccaccio's Decameron". The book is described as the "first complete, unexpurgated, American edition". A "publishers' introduction" gives the essential facts concerning Giovanni Boccaccio and the history of his hundred "novels". The book, printed on India paper, comes in two editions, cloth and limp leather. It is attractive in appearance, very convenient in its pocket size, and should serve a good cause in making more popularly known these great stories, presented to many only through exceedingly questionable hearsay. There may (or may not) be a bit of humor in the fact that the publishers of the volume deal largely in sport books. Our only real reservation as to the volume is that the translator is not named. This is a practice appositely commented upon in a recent review, in the New York "Evening Post" of the new volume "The Poems and Prose Poems of Charles Baudelaire with an introductory preface by James Huneker". The reviewer said:

> Who is the translator?—no hint on the title-page or elsewhere. There is still a perfect lack of uniformity among our publishers as to the usage in this matter. A few distinguished translators such as Mr. De Mattos and Mrs. Garnett are fully credited with their work. But a great many versions in English, from the French particularly, are still printed after the fashion of the present volume, which, from its title, might have been written by Baudelaire in English or have undergone a process of transmutation through the waving of a wand or the muttering of a formula by some person unnamed.

However, to return to Boccaccio. The edition of "The Decameron" in the library of the Gossip Shop is the London edition, imported by a New York publisher, in the series called "Early Novelists". This edition is translated by J. M. Rigg, and has an essay on Boccaccio "as man and author" by John Addington Symonds. Also several reproductions from the first illustrated edition of "The Decameron". It is an excellent volume, but somewhat fat.

James Branch Cabell, of Virginia, not long ago did us the honor of calling on the Gossip Shop. Our impression: a very pleasant gentleman, beautifully dressed. But what we are really getting at is: he wears an overcoat made of exactly the same material as his suit.

Grant M. Overton, whose striking gifts as a literary editor brought into being the brilliant literary supplement of the New York "Sun", "Books and the Book World", has withdrawn from that newspaper. When last seen by

the Gossip Shop, Mr. Overton conveyed the impression that he intended to devote himself altogether to writing for awhile. Mr. Overton is the author of two volumes recently published, "The Women Who Make Our Novels" and "Why Authors Go Wrong", and, we understand, a novel soon to appear. He is also a frequent contributor to THE BOOKMAN. "Books and the Book World" is now conducted by Harry Esty Dounce, who reviewed "Why Authors Go Wrong" in the November-December number of THE BOOKMAN.

Edwin E. Slosson, who is the literary editor of "The Independent", and whose widely popular dissertation "On Acylhalogerrarnine Derivatives and the Beckmann Rearrangement" won for him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, conferred upon him by the University of Chicago, has written the volume "Creative Chemistry", recently published.

Bliss Carman is in a sanitarium at Saranac, New York. A testimonial was arranged for him at the Anderson Galleries, New York, late in November. Mr. Carman's published works have averaged a volume a year for twenty-six years.

Alfred G. Gardiner, who until his recent retirement had been for the last seventeen years editor of the London "Daily News", has recently been taking a lecture spin about the United States. Mr. Gardiner is author of "Prophets, Priests and Kings", "Pillars of Society", and "War Lords". Since his retirement from the editorship of a great London daily, it has been revealed, what previously had been kept secret, that he is the author also of those two little collections of essayettes which he had run in the newspaper and published in book form over the signature, "Alpha of the Plough". The books were published in this country with the titles "Pebbles on the Shore" and "Leaves in the Wind".

The publishers of William Rose Benét's new book, "perpetual Light", declare in a circular of literary notes just come to hand that "such men as Christopher Morley have openly recognized William Benét as among the first two or three leading poets in this country". We, too, recognize Mr. Benét as a poet, and a good one, but we hesitate to do this "openly". We do it surreptitiously.

Our old friend Benjamin De Casseres is doing some uncommonly good writing lately. Perhaps you read his article on "Corners" published in the Sunday Magazine of the New York "Times" not long ago. Or better yet, his later article, published in the same place, on "Celebrated Union Men of History". Sub-title: "A Roll of Honor Which Includes Plato, Dante, Michelangelo and Benvenuto Cellini, but Not William Shakespeare." Well, a couple of weeks or so ago, Mr. De Casseres spilled an article in the literary supplement of the New York "Sun" called, "Hail, Laughter — World Hero!" This piece seemed (behind its fireworks) to have something to do with Romain Rolland. Anyhow, in it there is this conceit:

> We wonder what would have happened in 1914 if the editor of "Simplicissimus" had been the Emperor of Germany, Anatole France the Premier of France, Gilbert K. Chesterton the Prime Minister of England and Ireland, and Pete Dunn the President of the United States.

Perhaps, or rather doubtless, it is not necessary to remark that the best of Mr. De Casseres's work appears in THE BOOKMAN.

George Morgan, who wrote "The True La Fayette", came across this well-authenticated story of the hero years ago and carefully nursed it for his book—then forgot to put it in: it relates to La Fayette's visit to this country in 1824-25. He was in Pittsburgh, and many were in line to give him greeting. Of one man La Fayette asked: "Are you married?" "Yes, General," was the answer. "Happy fellow," pronounced La Fayette. To another he put the same query. "Why, no, General, I am single," was the answer this time. "Lucky dog," remarked the tactful great one in a husky whisper.

In America a grand total of almost 1,500,000 Kipling volumes has been sold. Of all the books, prose and verse, the most popular in this country has been "The Day's Work". The proportionate demand for Kipling's verse, though, during the last few years—and especially since the appearance last winter of "The Years Between"—it is said has been steadily growing. And Mr. Kipling's American publishers consider that the time has arrived for a collection of all Kipling's verses in a single volume. The result is a book containing all the old favorites and many lesser-known poems, entitled "Rudyard Kipling's Verse, Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918". A special edition, limited to 250 copies, will be issued, autographed personally by Mr. Kipling.

For the last five years Llewellyn Jones has edited the Friday Literary Review of the celebrated Chicago "Evening Post". (The last time the Gossip Shop saw him was when he was in the latter part of the year; but, no matter.) The review, we are told, has a subscription list that extends as far as Norway and Japan, and Mr. Jones's articles on current literature have friends in many parts of this country. He has not confined his attention to contemporary American writing. For some years he has made one of his literary hobbies the keeping in touch with the work of the poets of England. Corresponds with a number of them. And has been remarkably assiduous in collecting English works which have not yet been published in America. Recently entered upon his career as a lecturer on poetry, under management of Pond Lyceum Bureau.

The fairly well-known "Four Horsemen" has been secured for translation to the motion-picture screen by a large "pictures corporation". According to present plans, it will be produced with an all-star cast.

On April 3, 1920, John Burroughs will have entered his eighty-fourth year. He one time wrote: "April is my natal month, and I am born again into new delight at each return of it." Ever since "Wake Robin" was issued in 1870, he has given us a succession of essays, at intervals crystallized into books. Mr. Burroughs's study is a tiny cabin, "Slabsides", on a hill above his home at West Park, New York.

A group of writers ushered in the reign of the Booklovers' Tavern around a drinkless bar in the Hotel Majestic, New York City, one day late last November. The glasses, the bottles, and the brass rail were there. But no sparkling liquid, no foaming goblet made merry the opening of the tavern. It was a sedate and book-

ish festival, with Christopher Morley's "In the Sweet Dry and Dry" lined up on the counter four rows deep. Miss Katerina Astra, the comely bartender, presented a copy to Hamlin Garland, who shared in the christening. The Booklovers' Tavern is, in effect, a variation of the substitute saloon. The opening of one in the Majestic is the first step in what is expected to become a national movement to turn the barrooms of the country into clubs for the entertainment of their erstwhile habitués. An effort will be made to extend the work to quiet little places where there are no bookstores.

"The Forbidden Trail", Honore Willsie's new novel of the Arizona desert, though first of all a story, brings out an interesting and timely idea of the effort to invent a machine for conserving sun power as a substitute for coal. Mrs. Willsie's husband, Henry E. Willsie, is the inventor of a machine used in the Southwest, capable of developing high horse-power from the sun alone at a cost that would make it necessary for coal to be sold at sixty-six cents a ton to compete with it. While at present this machine is of constant practical value only in localities where the percentage of sunny days is large, we hope that in this novel—as in many another work of fiction—lies a first chapter of the triumphant story of a great new invention.

An enterprising Paris bookseller has inaugurated a grill-room in conjunction with his establishment. Here the books are arranged in shelves which act as a sort of enclosing screen to each table. "Les Annales" prints an engaging photograph of a diner comfortably seated within arm's reach of the surrounding volumes. This grill-room library is also the scene of a weekly writers' luncheon, at the conclusion of which a noted critic delivers his opinions on the "book of the day".

George Moore's novel "Evelyn Innes", we are glad to learn, has gone into the eighteenth edition. The publishers of this book say that they have noted an unusual interest in George Moore's books lately.

The death of H. Scott of Birkenhead, England, last June, his friends say was probably hastened by his long and arduous work on Professor A. T. Robertson's monumental "Grammar of the Greek New Testament". Mr. Scott was a retired banker of means and leisure whose hobby was the Greek New Testament. He became interested in Professor Robertson's "New Grammar" and gave himself unremittingly to the work of verification of all data in the books. Mr. Scott spent three years in carefully going through the large "Grammar" in search for errata of any kind. By his untiring zeal, added to the similar labor of Professor Robertson, the third edition is in a practically definitive form.

Word comes from London of the purchase by an American of a collection of letters, many of them unpublished, by Robert Louis Stevenson; of the 125 letters in the collection 119 are addressed to Sir Sidney Colvin and the other six to Mrs. Sitwell, now Lady Colvin. Many of the letters are said to be gossipy and good-humored; some of them echo the note of subsurface melancholy against which he fought bravely. In one of these letters he writes:

> The word is a wild place to set poor souls adrift in. . . . We run as in the Greek

games with our soul burning naked in our hands, and in such windy quarters! Why it does not go out and leave us peaceably in the dark, I cannot think. But I am built for misfortunes; they digest me like prunes; *rust coelum*, and you behold me still smiling at the end. . . . What will become of me? God knows, who made us all—and the chess board into the bargain.

It is reported that Ole Hanson, Seattle's celebrated mayor, has been working on a book having as its subject Americanism vs. Bolshevism, which will probably be published very early in the year.

A handsome thin quarto volume, "American Painters of Yesterday and Today" by Frederic Fairchild Sherman (who is also the publisher of the book), makes its appearance in a limited edition of five hundred copies. The following chapters make up the contents: "Miniature Landscapes by J. Francis Murphy", "The Landscape of Dwight W. Tryon", "Four Figure Pictures by George Fuller", "Early Oil Paintings by Winslow Homer", "Figure Pictures by Wyatt Eaton", "Arthur B. Davies", "Early Genre Pictures by Harry W. Watrous", and "Benjamin West". The author and publisher is himself a collector, or at least he buys a very good picture now and then, and his text is somewhat colored by personal bias. But those who are acquainted with the books made by Mr. Sherman do not need to be told that the letter-press and thirty illustrations are beautifully printed.

The heirs of David Graham Phillips have signed a contract with one of the big film companies authorizing the picturization of a number of Mr. Phillips's most popular novels. Among them are "The Cost", in which Violet Heming is to appear, and "The Hungry Heart".

A certain number of new Walpole letters having come to light since the publication of the last instalment (1905) of the late Mrs. Paget Toynbee's edition, in sixteen volumes, of the "Letters of Horace Walpole", Paket Toynbee, M. A., D. Litt., F. R. Hist. Soc., several years ago instituted fresh inquiries, public and private, for Walpole letters, with a view to the publication of a Supplement, under his editorship. Thanks to the good offices of numerous friends and correspondents in England and in America, these inquiries met with unexpected success. The result is a Supplement — in two volumes, uniform with the "Letters"—which contains 258 letters, or parts of letters. Of these, 110 are now printed for the first time; 23 are now first printed in full; and 125 are reprinted from various sources, some of which have only recently become available. The letters in the Supplement are chronologically arranged and edited with notes and indices. The volumes contain portraits and facsimiles.

A lecture by Walter de la Mare on "Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination" has just been published for the Woodberry Society. The lecture was delivered before the society on Mr. de la Mare's recent visit to America.

An interesting little article on the "evolution of the book jacket", by A. D. Marks, is printed in a recent number of "M. A. B." (short for "Mainly About Books"). The writer says, in part:

The bookshop window and the bookstall to-day attract the casual passer-by, whereas in days gone by it was only the reader, the student, and the man or woman actually interested in books who stopped to look. The bookshop in those days catered for the initiated only, but to-day new readers are enticed

to buy and read by the alluring appearance of the shop or stall. Booksellers have learnt the art of window-dressing, and publishers have helped them.

The secret of it all is the book-jacket, sometimes artistic, sometimes gaudy, but always arresting. It came with the new era in publishing, some twenty-five years ago, and the development of the three-colour process in printing made it possible.

Up till that time a book, if decorated at all, was stamped by its binders on the cloth binding with all sorts of devices which they kept in stock, chiefly pansies and buttercups, or scroll designs, deadly affairs even in those days. To protect this precious work a binder would sometimes "wrapper" the volume in any old waste paper he had by him, very often the printed sheets of an unsalable book, punch an oval aperture at the back, and thus display the title. Thus a not very alluring article was produced. Later a transparent paper, known as glacine, was used, and through this the binding and lettering could just be seen. This was used for fiction for many years, and, indeed, is used to-day for more serious books, though it has probably disappeared long before it reaches the reader's hands.

About this time, publishers began to take a much more lively interest in the cloth they used, and in the lettering, particularly as their glacine book-wrappers exposed the style of binding. The earlier editions of the works of Joseph Conrad, George Moore, Olive Schreiner, Louis Becke, S. R. Crockett, and many others were produced in a beautiful green cloth with gilt lettering, but with only a strip of glacine to protect them, and there was nothing about them which would make a shop-window anything but dull.

It was probably these excellent bindings which caused publishers to look round for more protection, and so what is now known as cover-paper came into use for all books, including fiction. This paper was produced in many artistic colours, and in substance was stiff and heavy enough to afford real protection to the book it covered.

Advertising was becoming a vigorous cult, attacking everything and everybody, and some disciple conceived the idea of filling up the vacant space on the wrapper with a paragraph descriptive of the work within, a helpful idea to both the bookseller and his customer. This plan is in use more than ever to-day, but it is chiefly confined to books other than fiction.

Very soon the output of fiction became enormous, and life in general became a much more hurried affair, and fiction-readers had no time to read the telling little puffs, so the book had to shout its description by some other means, and the picture with a punch came into being.

In this number of THE BOOKMAN will be found an article by Helen Bullis Kizer whose accidental death, as a result of a fall from horseback, occurred in Seattle a few weeks ago. This is one of the last things Mrs. Kizer wrote and it is an especially melancholy thought for the Gossip Shop, because we had come to look for the more or less regular letters from her which found their way East full of a pungent comment on the new books. Two fine sports, as one might say, claimed her active devotion: horseback riding and the tasting of literature; and it would be hard to say to which she gave herself with more complete satisfaction. We would repeat "active devotion", because it seems to us to describe with more than chance fidelity the quality of Mrs. Kizer's interest in books. Just as there is no indifferent or passive acquiescence—on the part of the rider, at least—to a galloping horse, so her mind found no immobile enjoyment in literature. Highly sensitive to the finer things both in prose and verse and with an excellent and practised critical faculty, she gave back what she got from books rather than merely absorbing it. This was the quality of her letters that made them altogether delightful.

It was in 1913 that the Gossip Shop —then in an earlier publishing incarnation—was mightily attracted by a review of a book of poems by a child. The review appeared in the literary supplement of the New York "Times" and was signed Helen Bullis. It was an admirable and rare appreciation which did what only really good critical work can do: it discovered to the reader at once the quality of mind of both the reviewer and the reviewed. And they were extremely pleasant to behold, the two of them. Before a meeting could come about, Miss Bullis had become Mrs. Kizer and had gone

to Spokane to live, so that it was not until 1916, during a trip Mrs. Kizer made East, that the Gossip Shop had the pleasure of meeting her. But a happy correspondence had flourished from the beginning and it was always the belief of the Gossip Shop that sooner or later Mrs. Kizer would give up her critical work long enough to write a book of her own. A small sheaf of poems written after her first year on the Coast and etching with stimulating vigor the impressions of a northwest city upon an eastern mind, gave distinct promise of this. It is to be regretted that this promise can not now be fulfilled. Apart from the articles in THE BOOKMAN, Mrs. Kizer's work was chiefly confined to book criticism in the columns of the New York "Times" Literary Supplement with occasional papers elsewhere, such as that in "The North American Review" upon the work of Amy Lowell.

In the spring of 1919 Mrs. Kizer visited New York to undergo treatment for a very severe attack of neuritis. She returned to the West ill and spent a distressing summer. Yet in the midst of it all she found time to write a jolly letter apropos of "The Young Visiters" which she read with peculiar enjoyment. The following paragraph quoted from this letter refers curiously enough to the "Times" review of the child's poems, and shows that someone else beside the Gossip Shop bore an affectionate memory of its happy awareness of beauty in a little girl's poems:

> Your books came yesterday, and while they would have been welcome under any circumstances, they were peculiarly so just now, when there is so little I can do except read and write. We have already read "The Young Visiters", with appropriate shrieks, and I am ordering several copies from the local bookseller to send to friends. It is the *find* of a generation; one "laps it up", as Mr. Salteena did his soup. The reviewers have nowhere done it justice. Saying that reminds me of an odd coincidence. Its reviewer in the "Times" quoted at length a paragraph from my own review of little Frances Swan Brown's poems, written six years ago; a review which—you have probably forgotten, but *I* remember—first drew your attention to my work. I was so intrigued by it, that I wrote Mr. Smyth, asking him who the reviewer with the flatteringly long memory may be.

The author of "The Sea Bride" (recently published) and of "All the Brothers Were Valiant", Ben Ames Williams, says that his first story entitled "Getting a Job" was rejected by nineteen magazines. His next seventy or eighty had different titles but the same record. Mr. Williams's big successes so far have been sea stories. His interest in the sea and much that he knows and feels about it probably he got by marriage, as his wife comes of a long line of old New England sea captains.

"Polyanna" was last year's greatest success in Japan, with "John Halifax, Gentleman" a close second. The American missionaries in the Orient report that while they are seeking to counteract the unwholesome continental literature that is found in Nippon, the Japanese paradoxically have expurgated the love scenes in "John Halifax, Gentleman", in accordance with their peculiar sense of delicacy. The romantic proposal of the hero to the heroine, for instance, is indicated in the Japanese version only by a row of asterisks, with a footnote explaining, "At this point he asked her to marry him". Ralph Connor's "Sky Pilot" also has a prominent position on Japanese book-shelves. And "Black Beauty" is said to have had great influence on the treatment of animals by the Japanese.

The publishers of the book announce that more than 160,000 copies have been sold of Vance Thompson's monumental work "Eat and Grow Thin".

FEBRUARY, 1920 VOL. L, NO. 6

THE BOOKMAN

STEPHEN CRANE

A Note Without Dates

BY JOSEPH CONRAD

MY acquaintance with Crane was brought about by S. S. Pawling, partner in the publishing firm of William Heinemann.

One day when I was in town Mr. Pawling said to me: "Stephen Crane has arrived in England. I asked him if there was anybody he wanted to meet and he mentioned two names. One of them was yours." I had then just been reading, like the rest of the world, Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage". The subject of that story was war, from the point of view of an individual soldier's emotions. That individual (he remains nameless throughout) was interesting enough in himself, but on turning over the pages of that little book which had for the moment secured such a noisy recognition, I had been even more interested in the personality of the writer. The picture of a simple and untried youth becoming through the needs of his country part of a great fighting machine, was presented with an earnestness of purpose, a sense of tragic issues, and an imaginative force of expression which struck me as quite uncommon and altogether worthy of admiration.

Apparently Stephen Crane had received a favorable impression from reading "The Nigger of the Narcissus", a book of mine which had also been published lately. I was truly pleased to hear this.

* * * *

On my next visit to town we met at a lunch. I saw a young man of medium stature and slender build, with very steady, penetrating blue eyes, the eyes of a man who not only sees visions but can brood over them to some purpose.

He had indeed a wonderful power of vision which he applied to the things of this earth and of our mortal humanity with a penetrating force that seemed to reach within life's appearance, and form the very spirit of their truth. His ignorance of the world at large—he had seen very little of it—did not seem to stand in the way of his imaginative grasp of facts, events, and picturesque men.

His manner was very quiet, his personality at first sight interesting, and he talked slowly with an intonation which on some people, mainly Americans, had, I believe, a jarring effect. But not on me. Whatever he said had